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THESIS

**AMERICANS' VIEWS OF THE MUSLIM WORLD:
REALITIES AND FALLACIES**

by

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December 2006

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**AMERICANS' VIEWS OF THE MUSLIM WORLD:
REALITIES AND FALLACIES**

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ABSTRACT

The 9/11 terror attacks prompted a large number of public opinion surveys in the Islamic world by Gallup, Pew, Zogby, and others seeking to understand the level and nature of Muslim antagonism toward America. Far less attention has been paid to public opinion surveys of Americans concerning their views of Islam, Muslims, and Muslim countries. This thesis sorts through the surveys and presents some surprising findings. First, while American views of Muslim have generally been rather unfavorable, the events of 9/11 did not have a marked change on those views. Moreover, Americans tend to make distinctions between Muslims as individuals, toward whom they have a relatively favorable view; Muslim countries, toward which they have a varied view; and Islam as a religion, toward which they have the most negative view. In addition, the polls show that misunderstandings about Islam and Muslims are pervasive among Americans.

This thesis argues that the American Muslim community must play a leading role in correcting such misperceptions. In the absence of a sustained effort, there is little in the survey data that would lead one to believe that a change in perception is imminent.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Americans' dealings with Muslims are as old as American history itself. Over time, the relations between the two parties have increased. Particularly since World War II, Muslim countries have become more important to U.S. interests. Similarly, for Muslim countries, relations with the United States have been an important foreign policy determinant. Consequently, Americans' interactions with Muslims and vice versa have also increased. The views of one party toward the other have never been as important as they have become in the last five years, following the horrific terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Continued unrest in the Middle East and South Asia, along with sporadic incidents of terrorism in Western Europe, has caused more damage than ever before to the relationship between Americans and Muslims. To stop this unhealthy trend threatening the better future of the world, there is a need to improve relations between the two parties. However, this improvement will only be possible if the two parties' leaders understand their public's view of the other party and find ways to bridge this rapidly increasing gap.

Polling data is one of the most effective ways to discover the public's view. Fortunately, major U.S. polling organizations have done a fantastic job of maintaining a database of all the major polls since 1935. These polls are extremely helpful in determining Americans' views of the Muslim World over time and finding trends that can help determine a better course of action for dealing with the Muslim World in the future. For the purpose of our research, the Muslim World has been arbitrarily divided into four regions: the East, the Middle East, the Middle West, and the West.

According to the polling data, Americans' views of the Muslim East have maintained a proportionate balance among the countries of the region. Muslim majorities live in Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, while a sizable Muslim minority also lives in India. Throughout the last fifty years, the Muslim-dominated countries have remained at the lower level of American polling scales that measure Muslim countries' trustworthiness, friendship, and favorability ratings. The post-9/11 polling frequency and corresponding data indicate that, in the last five years,

Muslim countries in the Eastern region have become more important to Americans. However, there has been no drastic change since 9/11 in the way Americans view these countries. Indonesia is the only exception. Its rating drastically changed, from a 25-percent to a more than 55-percent favorable rating, possibly because the Indonesians were also victims of a terrorist attack, on Bali, or perhaps because of the increase in interaction between Americans and Indonesians during the post-Tsunami reconstruction support extended by the United States.

In the Middle East, Turkey was the first Muslim country to appear on an American poll. Other Muslim countries of the region appeared on polls depending on any significant event that attracted US interests, and/or the relations of the Muslim countries with the US vis-à-vis other countries of the Middle East.. With few exceptions, the polling data on most of the Middle Eastern Muslim countries is extensive. Turkey has maintained a mostly favorable impression with Americans. A slight downward change occurred after the U.S. invasion of Iraq, when Turkey refused to allow the U.S. military to use its bases. Americans' views of Iran have remained bad since the Iranian Revolution in 1979. U.S. relations with Syria have been historically sour, a situation that is reflected in American public opinion polls. Jordan has remained mostly in the “good books” of the Americans. And since Egypt's improved relations with Israel following the 1973 Arab-Israel War, Egypt also has managed to find a place on Americans' friendly list. Iraq's relation to the United States has changed from decade to decade, depending on regional conditions and situations. Lastly, U.S. relations with countries on the Arabian Peninsula – the kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its neighboring countries – have been diplomatically and politically close; however, American public opinion has differed and fluctuated. Since 9/11, Saudi Arabia is the only Muslim country toward which Americans' view has undergone a drastic change, dropping from mostly favorable to mostly unfavorable. Americans' opinions toward other countries have also shown a change, but the change is not very significant.

In the Middle West Region of the Muslim World, Morocco is the only country toward which a majority of Americans hold an unfavorable view. The rest of the

countries that appear on American polls reflect that the majority of Americans either have no interest in them (i.e., there are no polls) or have an unfavorable view toward them. No significant data is available on post-9/11 American views of this region.

Americans' views of the Muslim West narrow down to only Muslim Americans, due to a lack of polling data on Muslims living in other countries of "the West." American Muslims are now a sizeable minority in the United States. They are originally from mostly South Asian countries and are reasonably well educated. They make a good living, primarily through managerial and professional jobs.

Polling data on American Muslims, Muslims, and Islam show that Americans view all three categories separately. Americans' views of American Muslims are the most favorable among the three, while Islam has the least favorability ratings. Polls also show that ratings differ according to age, education, region, and political party. Younger (<30 years), college graduate, eastern- and central-region, and Independent Party Americans hold better views of Muslims and Islam than others in the same category.

September 11, 2001, A Benchmark for renewed Concerns about Muslims. Critically evaluating the polling data reveals that September 11, 2001, marks the point in time in American history when relations with and understanding of Muslims became extremely important to the security of the United. That is why the polling data on all major Muslim countries is regularly updated. In addition, American Muslims' views of other Muslims and Americans' views of American Muslims were polled for the first time.

Consistent American Views of the Muslim World. Americans' view of the Muslim World has remained constant over the years, barring very few exceptions. The terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, and other terrorist events that followed, did not significantly alter Americans' views of most Muslim countries. However, Saudi Arabia and Arabs did register a major drop in American views toward them. The Middle Eastern region of the Muslim World, as one might expect, attracted the maximum American attention. While Americans' views of Saudi Arabia have deteriorated since 9/11, Americans' views of Indonesia have improved significantly since the Tsunami and the Bali terrorist bombings. Therefore, it is quite evident that Americans

view Arabs, in general, and Saudis, in particular, negatively because they were the perpetrators of 9/11. At the same time, Americans are sympathetic toward any country, regardless of religion, that is the victim of terrorist attacks similar to those that struck America on 9/11.

Americans View Muslims, Muslim Countries, and Islam Differently. The polls show that Americans' views toward Muslims, Muslim countries, and Islam differ, yet all maintain low favorability ratings in their respective categories: Muslims as individuals, Muslim countries, or Islam as a system. Therefore, Americans appear to use a "religious" lens when viewing Muslims. Within the United States, of the three categories – Muslim Americans, other Muslims, and Islam – Americans are most comfortable with Muslim Americans and least contented with Islam. This indicates that Americans also have a deep "nationalistic" bias toward their fellow Americans, regardless of race, religion, and ethnic distinctions. Islam, though it was rated favorable by the majority of respondents, remained below 40 percent and had an almost equal number of unfavorable ratings.

Americans' Views of Muslims Appear to Be Based on Three Factors. Americans' views of Muslim countries seem to depend on three main factors: Americans' threat perception of Muslims states, the United States' strategic interest in Muslim states, and Muslim states' relations with U.S.-friendly countries. The latter factor, especially in regard to Israel, appears to have a major impact on Americans' views. Other important factors include the reciprocal views of the populations of Muslim countries, their systems of governance, the role of Islam in the life of the people and running of the state, etc.

Americans' views of the Muslim World can be changed by increasing and improving Americans' knowledge of Islam and Muslims. This could be done best by actively involving American Muslims. They could facilitate bridging the gap between Americans and Islam by effectively demonstrating Islamic practices within a Western democracy. American Muslims are also fortunate to live in the best environment in the world from which to reform Islam by an active and fruitful facilitation of dialogue with the rest of the Islamic world. To avoid being called perpetrators of an "American conspiracy to diminish Islam," American Muslims, with the help of the U.S. government

and the governments of Muslim countries, must establish relationships with Islamic educational institutions. This is possible through education and fellowship with Islamic education centers.

In its own interest, the Muslim World has a great responsibility and opportunity to improve relations with the United States. To improve diplomatic relations, Muslim countries must realize that U.S. foreign policy is closely linked to American public opinion. No Muslim country can expect to have a lasting and successful relationship with the United States unless Americans view it favorably. For that to happen, Muslim countries need to improve their relations with Israel, make efforts to educate their populations to become followers of a legitimate Islam, and interact with the American public through all possible means, so they can provide first-hand knowledge about Islam, Muslims, and Muslim countries.

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I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

A. INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the Cold War, its role as the world's sole "superpower" has involved the United States in various military and diplomatic operations around the world. Most of these operations have been associated with Muslim countries in one way or another. In that association, faulty domestic policies of the Muslim World, coupled with a lack of understanding by the United States of the Muslim World, have resulted in a gradual split of opinion between the two.

The major issues often highlighted by the Muslim World are certain unresolved conflicts and the United States's quest to replace the present system of government in most of the Muslim World with democracy. On the American side, terrorist attacks by Muslims in the last one and a half decades, the most important attack being 9/11, have left a deep wound on the hearts and minds of Americans.

Is the situation worsening day by day? Indeed, yes. The continued instability in Afghanistan and Iraq; the recent Israeli aggression in Lebanon and the subsequent fallout; incidents such as reports of "Pakistani decent" British-Muslims plotting to blow up airlines heading toward the United States; rhetoric by leaders from both the Muslim World (particularly Iran) and the United States; and the ever-"spicy" role of the media, are all issues contributing to a greater-than-ever separation between the two sides.

Is the situation out of control and can nothing be done about it? No, absolutely not. If information is what makes opinions good or bad, then a change in information strategy would surely improve the situation. This does not mean using lies or empty promises; it means using information sensibly to help bridge the gap between the Muslim World and Americans, not using it to make the gap deeper and wider. To implement such an information policy, the first step is to discover how each side perceives the other. Much has been written about how Muslims view the United States and Americans,¹ but there has not been a similar comprehensive effort to determine how Americans view the Muslim

¹ For our purposes, "the United States" means the U.S. government; "Americans" means the American public.

World. Thus, it is important to know what “lens” the Americans use when they view Muslims, because unless and until this lens is identified and understood, no information policy will be sufficiently effective.

The purpose of this thesis, therefore, is to focus on the way(s) Americans view the Muslim world; the case study is developed exclusively from an American perspective. The research identifies issues of discontent between Americans and the Muslim World, which, in turn, helps differentiate between the valid issues and common fallacies. Drawing on our analysis of the case study, we propose a new information strategy to address these issues that will (hopefully) improve U.S.-Muslim relations and mutual understanding.

B. THESIS STRUCTURE

Theoretically, the foreign policy of a democratic country is in conformity with the wishes of the general populace. This is not always the case, however. So, to make doubly sure that, in the case of the American public’s view of the Muslim World, it conforms with American foreign policy, the statistics collected for our analysis of the subject mainly comprise polling data compiled over the last fifty years or so. Records prior to 1935 were not available from any of the recognized survey groups. As will be clear from our discussion in the thesis, for our purposes, data more than fifty years old by the date of this writing would likely be irrelevant anyway.

The first chapter provides a summarized history of the United States’ interaction with the Muslim World and identifies the time period within which the Muslim World’s point of view became a matter of growing concern for Americans. The second chapter comprises the polling data results recorded over time. The scope of the research is divided into four regions of the Muslim World: the East, the Middle East, the Middle West,² and the West. The third chapter consists of a region-based analysis of the polling data. The fourth chapter uses that analysis to devise an appropriate and effective information strategy and discusses the role American Muslims could play to improve the way Muslims are viewed not only around the world but more importantly by the Americans.

² An arbitrary region devised to facilitate geographic regional comprehension.

C. THE MUSLIM WORLD

Before discussing how others view the Muslim World, we must first define what we mean by the term “Muslim World.” According to Wikipedia, “the Muslim world is a term given to the world-wide community of those who adhere to the religion of Islam. This community . . . known as Muslims, number[s] approximately 1.4–1.6 billion people. This community does not constitute a distinct race, but [is] spread across every race; the world’s Muslims are connected only by the heritage of adhering to a common religion. The Diasporas of Muslims worldwide are also known collectively as the *ummah*.”³ For our purposes and to facilitate the depiction and analysis of data, we have divided the Muslim world into four regions: East, Middle East, Middle West, and West.

D. THE UNITED STATES–MUSLIM WORLD RELATIONSHIP: AN OVERVIEW

In 1776, very few Americans would have known much about the Muslim World. Islam loomed largely as a specter threatening Christendom. Knowledge was limited to a few books on library shelves that presented the Prophet Muhammad as the leader of a “wicked” religion whose followers were backward and clumsy.⁴ According to Douglas Little, in his recent book, “The revolutionary statesmen who invented America ... regarded the Muslim world, beset by oriental despotism, economic squalor, and intellectual stultification, as the antithesis of the republicanism to which they had pledged their sacred honor.”⁵

The early part of the nineteenth century saw small battles between America and the West-African Muslim nations. But by the latter part of the nineteenth century, America had established trade relations with the Muslim World, mainly the Arabs. While some Muslims arrived in America in the eighteenth century, mostly as slaves, the main influx began during the twentieth century and continues today.

In the early days following America’s independence, most Americans viewed Muslims as simply “anti-Christian.” Later, due to the weakening of the Ottoman Empire in

³ Muslim World, Wikipedia, accessed 7 July 2006; available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_World.

⁴ Douglas Little, *American Orientalism* (Chapel Hill, London: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

the nineteenth century and its eventual dissolution in the first quarter of the twentieth century, the Muslim World did not appear to be a threat to Christianity, and, therefore, more or less, “nobody cared.” During the post–WWI period, America even became “good friends” with many predominantly Muslim nations, including Turkey and Iran. However, the Islamic Revolution in Iran marked a resurgence of Islam, apparently in its most radical form. The subsequent “Hostage Crisis” in Iran left deep wounds on American hearts and minds and facilitated the projection of Muslims as “radicals” and “fanatics.” And certain events during the last fifteen years, especially since 9/11, have gradually brought Americans’ view of Muslims to an all-time low. The terror attacks carried out by a handful of so-called “Islamofacists” forced Americans to rethink America’s relationship with the Muslim World. According to Robin Wright, a *Washington Post* journalist,

Islam has now become synonymous in the minds of many with the biggest post cold war threat.... We pretend that we’re not prejudiced, that we understand that most Muslims don’t support the horrific bloodshed of bin Ladenism. Yet we still view 1.2 billion Muslim spread throughout [fifty-two] countries as a threatening monolith.

At present, there seems to be a large perception and communication gap between Americans and Muslims. While some issues are genuine, others are fallacies that could be corrected by a better exchange of information. The Muslim World has a lot to do toward improving this relationship, but, there is also a great deal that can be done to bridge this gap by American Muslims.

II. POLLING DATA AND SURVEY REPORTS

A. DATA COLLECTION

This chapter focuses on the collection of the thesis data. The data was derived from various polls and surveys that were conducted by renowned and authentic organizations like The Pew Charitable Trusts, The Gallup Poll, Zogby International, Harris, etc. Opinion polls and surveys are generally conducted either before or after an upcoming event of national significance. A few polls are conducted periodically, that is, monthly, quarterly, or yearly. The sample population for the polls is randomly selected. Depending on the type of poll and the procedures of the organization conducting the poll, it is sometimes possible to identify the religious/demographic diversity of the sample population. Usually, the organization conducting a poll includes details of the sample population with the poll results. In this chapter, the polling data for each of the four Muslim World regions – East, Middle East, Middle West, and West – is presented separately. And only the major Muslim population centers of each region are discussed, even if that particular country is not a recognized Islamic state.

B. MUSLIM WORLD: THE EAST

For the purposes of this paper, the Eastern Muslim World includes Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asian Muslim States (CAMS).⁶ Though the countries in this region are few in number, 60 percent of the world's Muslims live in this region. Indonesia is the largest Muslim-majority country, with around 205-million Muslims, while the greatest single regional concentration of Muslims is on the Indian subcontinent, with almost 400-million Muslims.⁷

Most of these countries were once European colonies. Afghanistan gained its independence from British control in 1919. India, Pakistan (Bangladesh included), Indonesia, and Malaysia achieved independence after World War II. The Central Asian

⁶ Map attached as Appendix A.

⁷ Robert Hefner, *Asian and Middle Eastern Islam* (Princeton: New Jersey, 2006). Hefner is the director of the Program on Islam and Civil Society at Boston University and author also of *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*. The discussion here is based on his presentation at the FPRI History Institute conference on Islam, Islamism, and Democratic Values, 6-7 May 2006.

states separated from the USSR following its disintegration in 1991. Polling data on Americans' views of these Muslim states was not available from any of our poll sources.

In general, Americans' views of the Muslim East have maintained a proportionate balance in accordance with the various countries of the region. In terms of their trustworthiness, friendship, and favorability, the countries remained among the lower ratings throughout the last fifty years. The frequent post-9/11 polling and corresponding data indicate that Muslim countries in this region have become more important to Americans in the last five years. However, there has not been a drastic change in the way Americans viewed these countries prior to 9/11, with the exception of Indonesia. Its rating changed drastically from a 25 percent favorable opinion to more than 55 percent, while the unfavorable opinion percentage remained almost the same. However, most of the Americans who had a neutral opinion about Indonesia before 9/11, had changed their opinion to favorable.

1. Indonesia

Indonesia is the world's fourth most populous country and the third largest democracy. According to the *Report of the National Commission on U.S.-Indonesian Relations*, an additional factor of particular importance for Indonesia from the American perspective is that

Indonesia has the world's largest Muslim population – more than all the Middle Eastern Arab states combined. The vast majority of Indonesia's Muslims have historically been noted for their moderation. Theirs is one of the few Muslim majority nations in which Islam is not the state religion.⁸

The earliest poll with information on Americans' view of Indonesians was conducted by Gallup in February 1960. This poll listed a total of seven countries: India, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan, South Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines.

The first poll question was: "In your opinion, which two of these nations can be depended upon as being the most friendly to the United States?" There were 3,458

⁸ Edward Masters, Report of the National Commission on U.S.-Indonesian Relations, National Bureau of Asian Research, accessed 23 September 2006, available at <http://www.nbr.org/publications/specialreport/pdf/USICR.pdf>.

responses.⁹ The results showed that among these seven countries, Indonesia was the lowest, with only 1.78 percent of Americans considering it the “most friendly.” The Philippines and Japan were the first two, respectively. Indonesia remained the lowest in the next year’s poll also, with a similar percentage, 1.74 percent.¹⁰

A decade later, Gallup asked which country Americans thought of as “most trustworthy.” Among the eleven East Asian and South Asian countries, Indonesia was in the fourth position; it was trusted by only 1.04 percent of Americans. The four countries trusted less than Indonesia were: Communist China, South Vietnam, Malaysia, and Singapore.¹¹

Indonesia did not appear on any of the American polls for the next thirty years. However, after 9/11, Gallup initiated a series of polls specifically intended to determine Americans’ views of the Muslim World. As the country with the largest Muslim population, Indonesia was included in two of the Gallup polls.¹² The results showed a dramatic improvement. Americans who had had a neutral view in 2002, had mostly converted to a favorable opinion in 2006.

	Very Favorable	Mostly Favorable	Mostly Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	No Opinion
1–3 Mar 2002	3.97%	18.61%	22.08%	8.09%	11.04%
	Neither Fav nor Unfav : 35.57% ¹³				
7–10 Feb 6006	6.13%	50.66%	22.79%	4.83%	14.33%

Table 1. Americans’ Views of Indonesia (After: 2002 and 2006 Gallup Polls)

⁹ Indonesia, Question 4-1, Poll #641, The Gallup Poll, 10-15 February 1961; accessed 10 October 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=Indonesia&SearchConType=>.

¹⁰ Indonesia, Question 3-1, Poll #655, The Gallup Poll, 8-13 February 1971 accessed 10 October 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=Indonesia&SearchConType=>.

¹¹ Indonesia, Question 16, Poll #840, The Gallup Poll, 19-21 November 1971, accessed 10 October 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=Indonesia&SearchConType=>.

¹² Indonesia, Question 4A, March Wave 1: American’s Views of Muslim Countries; and Question 26, Gallup Poll Social Series, World Affairs, The Gallup Poll, accessed 12 October 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=Indonesia&SearchConType=>.

¹³ Highlighted data is necessary for analysis purposes.

2. Malaysia

Malaysia is considered as one of the most modern and moderate Islamic States in the world.¹⁴ Since its full independence in 1963, Malaysia has experienced numerous internal problems. During Dr. Muhammad Mahatir's twenty-two years as prime minister, 1981–2003, however, Malaysia became an economic power in the region. Americans' views of Malaysia and Malaysians are hard to determine. In Malaysia's fifty-year history, it has appeared only twice in American polls. In March 1969, in a Harris-conducted poll to determine the American public's response to a possible invasion of Malaysia by a communist military force, 40.90 percent of Americans wanted the United States to stay out of the issue, 32.60 percent wanted the United States to help the Malaysians.¹⁵ A second poll was conducted in November 1971.¹⁶ Gallup conducted the poll, which asked Americans which country they thought of as "most trustworthy." Of eleven countries in South and South-East Asia, Malaysia was tenth, with a rating of 0.57 percent. There has been no poll about Malaysia since then, including since 9/11. This is quite interesting, considering that Dr. Muhammad Mahatir, the economic reformer of Malaysia, has been very critical of American policies, especially those toward the Middle East.

3. Bangladesh

Bangladesh is the fourth most densely populated Muslim state in the world. Till 1971, it was a part of the East Wing of Pakistan. Prior to December 1971, American views about Pakistan can be thought of as same about the Bangladeshi Muslims. Since December 1971, there has been no polling data available on Americans' views of Bangladesh.

4. India

Constituting almost 13 percent (174 million) of the population, Muslims are the largest minority group in India and the third largest population of Muslims in the Muslim World. There was no separate polling data available about the Muslims of India from any

¹⁴ Bruce Vaughn, Malaysia: Political Transition and Implications for US Policy, CRS Report for Congress, 21 October 2003, accessed 8 October 2006, available at <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL32129.pdf>.

¹⁵ Malaysia, Harris Poll #1926, March 1969, accessed 16 October 2006, available at http://cgi.irss.unc.edu/temp_docs/14:41:03:1.htm.

¹⁶ Malaysia, Poll #840, Question 16, The Gallup Poll: 19-21 November 1971, accessed 11 October 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=Malaysia&SearchConType>.

of our sources. But overall, in the past fifty years, Americans' view of Indians has been positive. In a poll of Asian countries conducted by Gallup between February 10, 1961, and February 15, 1961, 25.48 percent of the Americans rated India as "most friendly" to the United States.¹⁷ The Philippines had the highest rating, 69.52 percent, while Japan was No. 2 with 26.43 percent. By the beginning of the 1960s, in a similar poll, India had dropped down to fourth position, with a rating of 16.97 percent.¹⁸ In 1976, more than 50 percent of the Americans polled had a favorable view of India.¹⁹ The rating dropped to 30.91 percent in 1994.²⁰

Since the mid 1990s, there has been a gradual rise in a favorable American opinion toward India. The following data shows the American view toward India since the year 2000. The results are quite consistent, with a majority of Americans having a favorable view.²¹

	Very favorable	Mostly favorable	Mostly unfavorable	Very unfavorable	No opinion
2006 Feb 6–9	10	56	16	7	11
2005 Feb 7–10	10	65	15	3	7
2004 Feb 9–12	8	53	23	6	10
2002 Feb 4–6	7	49	25	8	11
2001 Feb 1–4	8	50	24	6	12
2000 Mar 17–19	7	40	30	8	15

Table 2. Americans' Views of India (After: Gallup Poll: Perceptions of Foreign Countries, 6–9 February 2006)

¹⁷ India, Question 4-1, Poll #641, The Gallup Poll, 10-11 February 1961, accessed 10 October 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=India&SearchConType=>.

¹⁸ India, Question 3-1, Poll #655, The Gallup Poll, 8-13 February 1971, accessed 10 October 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=India&SearchConType=>.

¹⁹ India, Question 4r, Poll #954, The Gallup Poll, 22 June 1976, accessed 10 October 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=India&SearchConType=>.

²⁰ American Public and U.S. Foreign Policy: Leadership, Question 16w-FormB, The Gallup Poll, 7-25 October 1994, accessed 16 October 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=India&SearchConType=>.

²¹ Perceptions of Foreign Countries, The Gallup Poll, 6–9 February 2006, accessed 16 October 2006, available at <http://galluppoll.com/content/default.aspx?ci=1624&t=qpnYX2HB2mXWUrd05T>.

How far this American view of India takes Indian Muslims into account is hard to determine. The issue will be discussed later in Chapter III.

5. Pakistan

Pakistan has the second largest population of Muslims in the world. Since its independence in 1947, due to the geopolitical situation, Pakistan has been a close ally of the United States.

The polling data on Pakistan dates back to February 1961. In the first poll, which was conducted by Gallup, Americans were asked which country they considered “most friendly” of seven Asian countries. Pakistan was rated sixth, with 4.33 percent, and Indonesia being rated the least friendly.²² A similar poll in September 1962 was a mirror image of the first.²³ During the Indo-Pak War of 1965, when the Americans were asked which country they sympathized with most, 6.22 percent sympathized with Pakistan, 11.69 percent with India, and 38.19 percent of the Americans did not support any of the countries. The “Don’t Know” and “Inapplicable” ratings were 23.40 percent and 20.50 percent, respectively.²⁴

Pakistan did not appear in polls for the next twenty-four years. In an ad hoc telephone survey conducted by Gallup in 1989, Americans were asked what nationality they would like to have as neighbors if they had to choose between Indians and Pakistanis. The results show that 15.22 percent preferred Pakistanis, while 77.56 percent preferred Indians to be their neighbors.²⁵ In 1990, almost 50 percent of Americans wanted to see a reduction of foreign aid to Pakistan.²⁶

²² Pakistan, Question 4-1, Poll #641, The Gallup Poll: 10-15 February 1961, accessed 16 October 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=Pakistan&SearchConType=>.

²³ Pakistan, Question 3-1, Poll #655, Poll: 8-13 February 1971, accessed 10 October 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=Pakistan&SearchConType=>.

²⁴ Pakistan, Question 8, Poll #917, The Gallup Poll: 11-21 September 1965, accessed 16 October 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=Pakistan&SearchConType=>.

²⁵ Pakistan, Question 11i, Ad Hoc Telephone Survey, The Gallup Poll, 24-28 January 1989, accessed 16 October 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=Pakistan&SearchConType=>.

²⁶ Pakistan, Question 1e, Foreign Aid: Environment Poll, The Gallup Poll: 5-6 April 1990, accessed 16 October 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=Pakistan&SearchConType=>.

In May 1998, *CBS News* conducted a poll to determine the feelings of Americans toward Pakistan. Eight percent had a favorable opinion, 54 percent had a neutral feeling, and 34 percent had an unfavorable opinion.²⁷ A poll conducted by Gallup within that same timeframe found that 65.79 percent of Americans saw a “Nuclear Pakistan” as a threat to the United States.²⁸ Two years later, almost the same number of Americans, 65.49 percent, considered Pakistan a *serious* threat to America.²⁹ In the last six years, the data has remained constant. There has been no drastic shift of opinion, neither after 9/11 nor after the 7/7 bombing in London. See details of the polls since 2000 in the following table.³⁰

	Very favorable	Mostly favorable	Mostly unfavorable	Very unfavorable	No opinion
2006 Feb 6–9	2	28	43	16	11
2005 Feb 7–10	4	37	40	9	10
2004 Feb 9–12	3	25	42	22	8
2003 Feb 3–6	2	24	42	20	12
2002 Feb 4–6	4	26	42	21	7
2000 Mar 17–19	2	19	39	20	20

Table 3. Americans’ Views of Pakistan (After: Gallup Poll: Perceptions of Foreign Countries, 6–9 February 2006)

6. Afghanistan

Afghanistan did not appear in polling data for Americans until January 1980. Following President Jimmy Carter’s State of the Union address, there was a Harris-conducted survey to determine Americans’ view of the Afghanistan crisis and its handling

²⁷ Pakistan, CBC News Poll, 19 May - 21 May, accessed 16 October 2006, available at <http://www.pollingreport.com/pakistan.htm>.

²⁸ Pakistan, Question 11ad, American Public Opinion and Foreign Policy Poll, The Gallup Poll, 5-7 June 1998, accessed 16 October 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=Pakistan&SearchConType=>.

²⁹ Pakistan, Question 20e, March, Wave 2, The Gallup Poll, 17-19 March 2000, accessed 16 October 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=Pakistan&SearchConType=>.

³⁰ Perceptions of Foreign Countries, The Gallup Poll, 6-9 February 2006, accessed 16 October 2006, available at <http://galluppoll.com/content/default.aspx?ci=1624&t=qpnYX2HB2mXWUrd05T>.

by the Carter administration. In his address, President Carter announced a number of steps intended to make the Soviet Union pay for its aggression in Afghanistan. For example, Carter declared that “any use of outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf oil area will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the U.S. and will be repelled by American military force.”³¹ This warning was favored by 70.10 percent of Americans.

In 1986, a study was conducted by *USA Today* to determine how Americans viewed the resolution of the Afghanistan situation. The study revealed that 87.40 percent of Americans considered it extremely important that America reach an agreement with the Soviet Union for the resolution of the Afghan Crisis.³² In the 1990s, Afghanistan reappeared in American polls when the United States launched antiterrorist strikes on terrorist facilities in Afghanistan: 65.82 percent of Americans supported the strikes.³³ Since the 9/11 terrorist strikes, given the attackers’ links to Afghanistan, Afghanistan has appeared regularly in American polls. A Gallup poll taken immediately after 9/11 showed that 81.71 percent of Americans favored the United States taking direct military action in Afghanistan.³⁴ The following table depicts polling data for American views of Afghanistan since the defeat of the Taliban in 2002. As shown, the opinions had slightly varied in 2005. Overall, the results are consistent, with most of the Americans polled maintaining an unfavorable view of Afghanistan.³⁵

³¹ Afghanistan, Question #4a, Harris Survey Collection #802106, Odum Institute, January 1980, accessed 15 November 2006, available at <http://cgi.irss.unc.edu/cgi-bin/POLL/search.poll.cgi>.

³² Afghanistan, USA Today Study #9194, Odum Institute, October 1986, accessed 15 November 2006.

³³ Afghanistan, Question 5, Anti-Terrorist Air Strike Reaction Poll, The Gallup Poll: 20 August 1998, accessed 16 October 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=Afghanistan&SearchConType=>.

³⁴ Afghanistan, Question 14, Terrorist Reaction Poll #3, The Gallup Poll: 21-22 September 2001, accessed 16 October 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=Afghanistan&SearchConType=>.

³⁵ Perceptions of Foreign Countries, The Gallup Poll: 6-9 February 2006, accessed 16 October 2006, available at <http://galluppoll.com/content/default.aspx?ci=1624&t=qpnYX2HB2mXWUrd05T>.

	Very favorable	Mostly favorable	Mostly unfavorable	Very unfavorable	No opinion
2006 Feb 6–9	3	24	42	23	8
2005 Feb 7–10	6	34	37	17	6
2004 Feb 9–12	4	24	39	26	7
2003 Feb 3–6	2	23	40	26	9
2002 Feb 4–6	4	22	34	34	6

Table 4. Americans' Views of Afghanistan (After: Gallup Poll: Perceptions of Foreign Countries, 6–9 February 2006) Black highlighted data (with white text) in the table is “most important” for analysis purposes; the “important” data is highlighted in grey.

C. MUSLIM WORLD: THE MIDDLE EAST

The Middle East comprises a total of sixteen countries: Turkey, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, UAE, Yemen, and Iran.³⁶ With the exceptions of Cyprus and Israel, the countries not only are Muslim-dominated, but also are run by Islamic governments. The Middle East is the most important region in the world for Muslims. This is not because of their numbers; it is because of the significant historical and Islamic associations of the area.

One general misconception in the West is that the Middle East is the main population center of Muslim World and thus the hub of Islam. According to Robert Hefner,

the West have [*sic*] long identified Islam with Arab culture. In one sense this is reasonable enough. After all, the Quran and the canonical accounts of the actions and sayings of the Prophet Mohammed (the Hadith) are all written in Arabic, and Muslim scholars insist that a proper study of these sacred works is possible only in Arabic. The holy lands to which Muslims daily turn in prayer, and to which they are enjoined to make the pilgrimage at least once in their life if they have the means, are also located in Arab lands. And during the first century of their spectacular expansion from the Arabian peninsula north into Syria, westward to Spain, and eastward

³⁶ Map is attached as Appendix B.

toward India beginning in the seventh century C.E., the armies that created one of the most cosmopolitan empires Eurasia has ever seen were Arab-led and Arab-staffed.³⁷

To summarize, out of fifty-two Muslim-majority countries, only fourteen are in the Middle East, with a Muslim population of 252 million out of a total Muslim population of approximately 1.2 billion people throughout the world.³⁸ Most of the Muslims involved in the terrorist acts against the West, particularly against the United States, were directly or indirectly connected to one of the Middle Eastern countries. With the post-9/11 engagement of the United States in Iraq; the continuous nuisance created by Iraq's neighbors Iran and Syria; the change of the political situation in Palestine, with Hamas loosely holding onto power; and the recent Israel-Lebanon crisis, the Middle East has become ever more volatile in terms of American interests.

In 1947, Turkey became the first Muslim country to appear in American polls. Other Muslim countries of the region appeared when an event attracted U.S. interest or their relations with the United States vis-à-vis other countries of the Middle East. Again, with few exceptions, polling data on most Middle Eastern Muslim countries is extensive. Turkey has mostly maintained a favorable impression with Americans. A slight downward change has occurred since the U.S. invasion of Iraq and Turkey's refusal to provide bases for U.S. military operations. As for Iran, the Islamic Revolution and the subsequent hostage crisis left a deep negative impression on the American mind; Iranian Muslims are regarded as "radicals" and "fanatics." U.S. relations with Syria have historically been sour, a circumstance that is reflected in the polls. Jordan has remained mostly in Americans' "good book." Since 1973, Egypt also has had a place on the U.S. "friendly" list. Iraq's relations with the United States have changed from decade to decade, depending on regional conditions and situations. Lastly, U.S. relations with countries on the Arabian Peninsula – the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the other neighboring countries – are diplomatically and politically close, but American public opinion has varied and fluctuates. Since 9/11, Saudi Arabia is the only Muslim country toward which Americans'

³⁷ Robert Hefner, *Asian and Middle Eastern Islam* (Princeton: New Jersey, 2006).

³⁸ "Islam by Country," Wikipedia, accessed 7 June 2006, available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_by_country.

views have drastically changed: Saudi Arabia has dropped from mostly favorable to mostly unfavorable. While Americans' opinions on other countries have also shown a change, the change is insignificant.

1. Turkey

The United States' relations with Turkey have gradually improved, to the point that Turkey has become a very close ally. This relationship began in the mid-1920s when Kamal Ataturk became, as he is now known, the "Father" of a new, secular nation. Turkey is the only Muslim country that is an active member of NATO. When Turkey was being considered as a potential member of NATO, Gallup conducted a poll that asked the following question:

Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, including the United States, England, Canada, Iceland, France, and other European countries, are joined together by a mutual defense pact -- that is, they have agreed to come to each other's defense if any one of them is attacked. Do you favor or oppose allowing Turkey to join this pact?³⁹

The results of the poll were: Favor (62.01%), Oppose (13.41%), No Opinion (24.58%).

In 1990, a poll conducted to determine American opinion of countries that were vital to the United States' political, economic, and security interests showed that almost 41 percent of Americans considered Turkey vital to U.S. interests.⁴⁰ However, the polls have not always been in favor of Turkey. When asked whether, in the event that Turkey was attacked by communist-backed forces, America should send troops, send military supplies but not troops, or refuse to get involved, almost 50 percent of Americans thought that the United States should refuse to get involved.⁴¹ Overall, Turkey has been viewed better than

³⁹ Turkey, Question 7b, The Gallup Poll # 480, The Gallup Poll: 19 September 1951, accessed 1 June 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=Turkey&SearchConType=>.

⁴⁰ Turkey, Question 17k, American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy Poll, The Gallup Poll: 30 October - 15 November 1990, accessed 1 June 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=Turkey&SearchConType=>.

⁴¹ Turkey, Question 4m, The Gallup Poll # 928, The Gallup Poll: 15 April 1975, accessed 10 June 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=Turkey&SearchConType=>.

other Muslim countries. The unfavorable opinion comprised the response of less than a quarter of Americans. The latest poll in February 2006 showed a similar trend:⁴²

	%	#
Very favorable	9.64	83
Somewhat favorable	28.38	245
Neither favorable nor unfavorable	28.66	247
Somewhat unfavorable	16.87	146
Very unfavorable	6.18	53
Don't know	9.38	81
Refused to answer	0.88	8

Table 5. Americans' Views of Turkey (From: Gallup Poll: American's View of the Islamic World, 8 February 2006)

2. Syria

Over the years, bilateral U.S.–Syria relations have ranged roughly between a grudging mutual accommodation and outright mutual hostility. Nevertheless, even when the relationship has been severely strained, the United States' fundamental policy toward Syria, particularly in regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict, has remained constant. The United States endorses UN Security Council Resolution 242, the implementation of which would return the Golan Heights, annexed by Israel in the 1967 war, to Syrian control.⁴³ For the last fifteen years, the American public's view of Syria has been consistent.⁴⁴ In a Gallup poll conducted on August 8–11, 1991, 24 percent of Americans had a favorable opinion of Syria. In January 2000, the percentage dropped by 4 percent, but rose again, to 25 percent,

⁴² Dalia Mogahed, Americans' View of the Islamic World, The Gallup Poll, 10 February 2006, accessed 1 June 2006, available at <http://www.galluppoll.com/content/?ci=21349>.

⁴³ Syria, CIA: The World Factbook, accessed 2 June 2006, available at <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>.

⁴⁴ No polling data is available for Syria prior to August 1991.

in February 2005. Overall, a majority of Americans had a consistently adverse view of Syria. The following table shows Americans' view of Syria during the last one and half decades.⁴⁵

	Very Favorable	Mostly Favorable	Mostly Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	No Opinion
7–10 Feb '05	2	23	41	19	15
25–26 Jan '00	2	18	32	12	36
8–11 Aug '91	2	22	37	15	25

Table 6. Americans' Views of Syria (After: Gallup Poll: Perceptions of Foreign Countries, 6–9 February 2006)

3. Lebanon

Lebanon enjoys generally good official relations with the United States, which has always supported and continues to support Lebanon's political independence.⁴⁶ Yet the American public's view of Lebanon has been relatively "cool."

Polling data on Lebanon dates back to 1958.⁴⁷ Historically, most of the polls concern the issue, at different points in time, of sending American troops to Lebanon. The first poll that focused on Americans' view of Lebanon was conducted by Gallup in March 2002.⁴⁸ In this poll, 45 percent of Americans had an unfavorable view of the Lebanese; only 17 percent had a favorable view. Lebanon placed second to last in Americans' favorable ratings. However, a review of the same poll by David Moore highlights an

⁴⁵ Perceptions of Foreign Countries, The Gallup Poll, 6-9 February 2006, accessed 16 October 2006, available at <http://galluppoll.com/content/default.aspx?ci=1624&t=qpnYX2HB2mXWUrd05T>.

⁴⁶ Alfred B. Prados, Lebanon, CRS Report for Congress, 10 June 2005, accessed 19 November 2006, available at <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33509.pdf>.

⁴⁷ Lebanon, The Gallup Poll, accessed 2 June 2002, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchType=lebanon&SearchConType=1>.

⁴⁸ March, Wave 1: Americans' Views of Muslim Countries, The Gallup Poll, 1-3 March 2003, accessed 2 June 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/documents/questionnaire.aspx?STUDY=P0203008>.

interesting aspect: “Overall, the people in Lebanon gave a net positive rating to the United States, by 42% to 40%, while Americans gave a net negative rating to Lebanon, by 45% to 17%.”⁴⁹

In the recent Hezbollah-Israel crisis, a majority of Americans remained neutral; however, more than a quarter of Americans supported Israel. Less than one percent supported Hezbollah, which represented Lebanon in the crisis.⁵⁰ The following figure shows the opinion graphically:

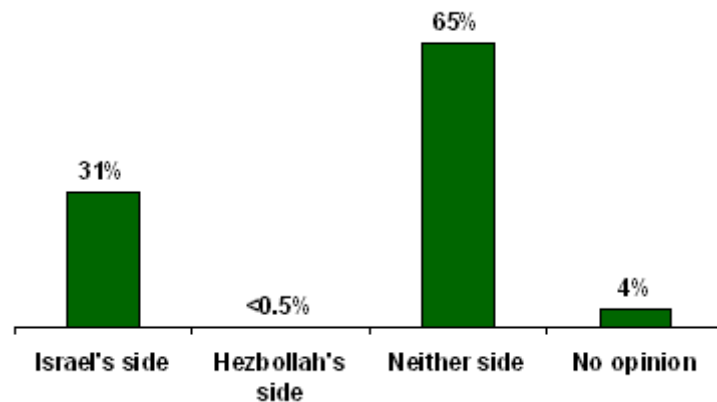


Figure 1. Americans' opinions of Hezbollah-Israel Crisis (From: Gallup Poll: Americans Favor Neutral U.S. Stance on Israel-Hezbollah Conflict, 26 July 2006)

4. Jordan

Although Amman established diplomatic relations with Washington in 1949, the United States did not become actively involved in Jordan until 1957, when it replaced Britain as the Hashemite Kingdom's principal Western source of foreign aid and political support.⁵¹ Since then, Jordan's relations with the United States have remained friendly and

⁴⁹ David W. Moore, Americans More Unfavorable Than Favorable toward Muslim Countries, The Gallup Poll: 5 March 2002, accessed 23 November 2006, available at <http://institution.gallup.com.libproxy.nps.navy.mil/content/default.aspx?ci=5428>.

⁵⁰ Jeffrey M. Jones, Americans Favor Neutral U.S. Stance on Israel-Hezbollah Conflict, The Gallup Poll, 26 July 2006, accessed 31 October 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/content/default.aspx?ci=23890>.

⁵¹ Jordan, CIA: The World Factbook, accessed 2 June 2006, available at <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>.

cooperative, in economic as well as military matters. However, the relations have been clouded by King Hussein's lack of confidence in Washington's policy toward Israel and the occupied territories.⁵²

Americans' views toward Jordan have been more favorable than unfavorable. In 1991, almost 30 percent of Americans held a favorable view of Jordan.⁵³ In 1999, Americans' views of Jordan improved remarkably, to more than 60 percent.⁵⁴ In 2002, Gallup conducted a poll entitled, March Wave 1: American's View of the Muslim Countries. Analysis of this poll, like the one done for Lebanon, revealed a great difference between the ratings of Americans and those of Jordanians; however, the results were the reverse of those for Lebanon.

According to Moore, "Americans expressed a net positive opinion of Jordan by four percentage points (32% favorable to 28% unfavorable), while people in Jordan expressed a large net negative opinion of Americans by 40 percentage points (just 22% favorable to 62% unfavorable)."⁵⁵ A 2005 Gallup poll showed that 54 percent of Americans had a favorable view of Jordan, while only 32 percent had an unfavorable view.⁵⁶ In the latest polls conducted in February 2006, another change was observed. Almost 30 percent of Americans had a neutral view of Jordan, while the net rating remained positive, as before. The details of the poll are as follows:⁵⁷

⁵² Jordan, CIA: The World Factbook, accessed 2 June 2006, available at <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>.

⁵³ Jordan, Question 11d, August Wave 2, The Gallup Poll: 8-11 August 1991, accessed 2 June 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=jordan&Search ConType=1>.

⁵⁴ Jordan, Question 2d, Special Interest Survey, The Gallup Poll, 8-9 February 1999, accessed 2 June 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=jordan&Search ConType=1>.

⁵⁵ David W. Moore, Americans More Unfavorable Than Favorable toward Muslim Countries, The Gallup Poll, 5 March 2002, accessed 23 November 2006, available at <http://institution.gallup.com.libproxy.nps.navy.mil/content/default.aspx?ci=5428>.

⁵⁶ Jordan, Question 26o, The Gallup Poll Social Series: World Affairs, The Gallup Poll: 7-10 February 2005, accessed 2 June 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=jordan&Search ConType=1>.

⁵⁷ Perceptions of Foreign Countries, The Gallup Poll, 6-9 February 2006, accessed February 17, 2006, available at <http://institution.gallup.com.libproxy.nps.navy.mil/content/?ci=1624>.

	%	#
Very favorable	7.78	67
Somewhat favorable	24.53	212
Neither favorable nor unfavorable	29.84	257
Somewhat unfavorable	18.57	160
Very unfavorable	8.91	77
Don't know	10.01	86

Table 7. Americans' Views of Jordan (After: Gallup Poll: Perceptions of Foreign Countries, 6–9 February 2006)

5. Egypt

According to the *CIA World Factbook*, 2006, “Egypt's foreign policy was pulled in opposite directions by the ideals of anti-imperialist nonalignment and the webs of dependency in which the country was increasingly enmeshed.”⁵⁸ Egypt's national ideal was to be independent of both the East and West, to be a strong prosperous state, to stand up to Israel, and to lead the Arab world. The U.S. position in the Arab-Israeli War (1967) made it clear to Egypt that this dream would not be possible unless Egypt aligned its policies with the interests of the United States.

Opinion polls of the mid 1950s showed that 50 percent of Americans were aware of the trouble between Israel and Egypt. A poll conducted on October 25, 1955, asked who, in Americans' view, was the chief cause of the trouble between Israel and Egypt.⁵⁹ The poll resulted in the following percentiles: Egypt (11.20%), Israel (19.43%), Neither (17.04%), No opinion (52.32%). When asked on May 29, 1956, about Americans' sympathy for either side, the result was Egypt (4.77%), Israel (14.91%), Neither (76.77%), Don't know/no answer (3.55%). A poll at the end 1956 indicated that 18 percent of Americans had a favorable view of Egypt while 52 percent had an unfavorable view. Ten years later, 47 percent of Americans approved of Egypt, and the unfavorable

⁵⁸ Egypt, CIA: The World Factbook, accessed 2 June 2006, available at <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>.

⁵⁹ Egypt, The Gallup Poll, accessed 9 June 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=egypt&SearchConType=1> (All polls regarding Egypt available on above cited reference.).

opinion had dropped to 37 percent. Following the 1967 war, the opinion polls again showed a drastic change. By 1973, only 0.48 percent of Americans considered Egypt a friendly country.⁶⁰

Following the 1973 War, however, Egypt negotiated peace with Israel. Its relations with the United States then changed, and so did Americans' opinions of Egyptians. In 1978, almost 50 percent of Americans had a favorable opinion about Egypt. Later, the figures improved by another 10 percent and fluctuated plus or minus 5 percent in the same range. The best year was 1981, when the favorable opinion touched 72 percent.⁶¹ Polling data for the last fifteen years showed similar results.⁶² Post-9/11, almost 10 percent of Americans indicated a drop in their favorable view of Egypt, but overall, the favorable ratings remained more than 50 percent. The details of various polls conducted over the last fifteen years are as follows:

	Very favorable	Mostly favorable	Mostly unfavorable	Very unfavorable	No opinion
2006 Feb 6–9	8	50	22	5	14
2005 Feb 7–10	8	56	22	4	10
2004 Feb 9–12	7	51	25	7	10
2003 Feb 3–6	6	50	20	5	19
2002 Feb 4–6	7	47	29	5	12
2001 Feb 1–4 ^	11	54	19	4	12
1996 Mar 8–10	10	48	19	5	17
1991 Aug 8–11	9	54	15	5	17
1991 Mar 14–17	11	55	14	3	17
1991 Jan 30–Feb 2	10	56	12	3	19

* Graphical depiction of the poll is attached as Appendix E.

Table 8. Americans' Views of Egypt (After: Gallup Poll: Perceptions of Foreign Countries, 6–9 February 2006)

⁶⁰ See fn. 62.

⁶¹ Egypt, Question 10b, The Gallup Poll #168G, The Gallup Poll, 27 January 1981, accessed 9 June 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=egypt&SearchConType=1>.

⁶² Perceptions of Foreign Countries, The Gallup Poll: 6-9 February 2006, accessed 17 February 2006, available at <http://institution.gallup.com.libproxy.nps.navy.mil/content/?ci=1624>.

6. Iraq

Iraq's ties with the United States developed more slowly than other countries', primarily because the Baathists were antagonistic to the close U.S.-Israel relationship. Following the June 1967 Arab-Israeli War, before the Baath came to power, U.S.-Iraq relations had been severed. However, shortly after, in 1968, the new Iraqi government became interested in acquiring American technology for its development programs.⁶³ In 1991, Iraq emerged as a threat to both regional security and U.S. interests. Since the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the situation there has become a major focus of American public debate.

The view of the American public has been rather cold concerning Iraq. In 1980, at the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war (1980–1988??), 26 percent of Americans backed Iraq, as compared to 6 percent who supported the “revolutionized Iran.”⁶⁴ However, more than three-quarters of Americans either had no opinion or did not support any of the parties. One year later, a poll conducted regarding Americans' view of Iraq, showed that only 28 percent of Americans had a favorable view of Iraq, while 65 percent had an unfavorable view.⁶⁵ After 1991, the unfavorable percentages increased further. Post-9/11, there was no significant change. However, after the successful Operation Iraqi Freedom campaign, Americans' favorable view of Iraq jumped. But recent polls show a decline in the favorable ratings. Overall, a majority of Americans have maintained an unfavorable opinion of Iraq. Detailed results for last fifteen years are as follows:⁶⁶

⁶³ Iraq, CIA: The World Factbook, accessed 2 June 2006, available at <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>.

⁶⁴ Question 1d, Gallop Poll #164G, The Gallup Poll, 4 November 1980, accessed 3 June 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=iran%20iraq%20war&Search ConType=1>.

⁶⁵ Question 10e, Gallop Poll #168G, The Gallup Poll: 27 January 1981, accessed 3 June 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=iran%20iraq%20war&Search ConType=1>.

⁶⁶ Perceptions of Foreign Countries, The Gallup Poll: 6-9 February 2006, accessed 3 June 2006, available at <http://institution.gallup.com.libproxy.nps.navy.mil/content/?ci=1624>.

	Very favorable	Mostly favorable	Mostly unfavorable	Very unfavorable	No opinion
2006 Feb 6–9	3	18	39	36	5
2005 Feb 7–10	4	25	38	28	5
2004 Feb 9–12	4	17	39	35	5
2003 Feb 3–6	1	4	33	57	5
2002 Feb 4–6	2	4	39	49	6
2001 Feb 1–4	2	7	34	51	6
2000 Nov 13–15	2	4	35	53	6
1999 May 7–9	1	4	38	53	4
1999 Feb 8–9	2	5	27	60	6
1996 Mar 8–10	1	5	34	52	8
1992 Feb 6–9	1	3	30	62	4
1991 Aug 8–11	1	6	32	54	7
1991 Mar 14–17	2	5	26	62	5
1991 Jan30–Feb 2	*	3	17	73	7

Table 9. Americans' Views of Iraq (After: Gallup Poll: Perceptions of Foreign Countries, 6–9 February 2006)

7. Iran

The United States was an ally of the late Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who ruled from 1941 until his ouster on 11 February 1979. Since then, there have been no diplomatic relations between the two countries. The American Embassy hostage crisis following the Iranian Revolution left a deep mark on the hearts and minds of the American people. Americans' views on Iran are well represented by opinion polls. A poll taken on June 22, 1976, while the Shah was in power, shows that almost 50 percent of Americans had a favorable view of Iran; 36 percent had an unfavorable view.⁶⁷ Following the ousting of the Shah, the unfavorable percentage increased to more than 50 percent.⁶⁸ Since then,

⁶⁷ Iran, Question 4s, The Gallup Poll #954, The Gallup Poll, 26 June 1976, accessed 9 June 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=iran&SearchConType=1>.

⁶⁸ Iran, Question 5f, The Gallup Poll #123G, The Gallup Poll: 20 February 1979, accessed 9 June 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=iran&SearchConType=1>.

the unfavorable figures have not dropped below that percentage rate. There was no change in Americans' view of Iran after 9/11. The detailed results of polls since 1989 are as follows:⁶⁹

	Very favorable	Mostly favorable	Mostly unfavorable	Very unfavorable	No opinion
2006 Feb 6–9	1	6	40	46	6
2005 Feb 7–10	1	11	49	33	6
2004 Feb 9–12	3	14	46	31	6
2003 Feb 3–6	2	11	48	29	10
2002 Feb 4–6	2	9	46	38	5
2001 Feb 1–4	2	10	45	38	5
1996 Mar 8–10	1	5	38	46	10
1991 Aug 8–11	1	12	44	35	9
1991 Mar 14–17	3	11	41	35	10
1991 Jan 30–Feb 2	2	11	39	40	8
1989 Aug 10–13	1	4	27	62	6
1989 Feb 28–Mar 2	1	4	27	62	6

Table 10. Americans' Views of Iran (After: Gallup Poll: Perceptions of Foreign Countries, 6–9 February 2006)

In the February 2002 poll, Americans were found to be more negative toward Iran than Iranians were toward the United States. However, while both populations saw the other country in net negative terms, Americans expressed a net unfavorable rating of 72 percent to 10 percent favorable. Iranians expressed a net negative rating of the United States by a somewhat smaller margin, 63 percent to 14 percent.⁷⁰

8. Saudi Arabia

As the largest oil-producing country in the world, Saudi Arabia has long enjoyed a cordial, mutual interest-based relation with the United States. The earliest poll available was taken in 1986. The poll question asked whether the United States had a vital interest

⁶⁹ Perceptions of Foreign Countries, The Gallup Poll: 6-9 February 2006, accessed 3 June 2006, available at <http://institution.gallup.com.libproxy.nps.navy.mil/content/?ci=1624>.

⁷⁰ David W. Moore, Americans More Unfavorable than Favorable toward Muslim Countries, The Gallup Poll: 5 March 2002, accessed 23 November 23, 2006, available at <http://institution.gallup.com.libproxy.nps.navy.mil/content/default.aspx?ci=5428>.

in Saudi Arabia. Almost 90 percent of Americans in a Leadership Poll and 77 percent of Americans in a Public Poll considered Saudi Arabia of vital interest to the United States.⁷¹ However, Americans' view of Saudi Arabia as a country diverged from their view of the United States' economic interests. Polls taken in December 1986 showed that 34 percent of Americans had an unfavorable view of Saudi Arabia itself, 33 percent were neutral, and 29 percent had a favorable view. Following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the polls showed that almost 55 percent of Americans had a favorable view of Saudi Arabia. The neutral percentage dropped to about 24 percent. Later, in an August 1994 poll, the results were similar to those in 1986.⁷²

Another interesting poll taken by Gallup, in 2000, asked whether Americans considered Saudi Arabia *an ally of the United States, considered Saudi Arabia friendly but not an ally, considered it unfriendly, or considered it an enemy of the United States*.⁷³ *Almost 42 percent of Americans viewed Saudi Arabia as an unfriendly ally: see the results below.*

	%	#
An ally	18.38	114
Friendly, but not an ally	38.38	239
Unfriendly	23.49	146
An enemy of the United States	11.68	73
Don't know / Refused to say	8.08	50

Table 11. Poll: Is Saudi Arabia an Ally of the U.S.? (After: Gallup Poll: Foreign Affairs: 15–21 May 2000)

⁷¹ Saudi Arabia, Questions 13i and 172, FormB, American Public and U.S. Foreign Policy (Leadership and Public Polls), The Gallup Poll, 20 September - 18 November 1986, accessed 9 June 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=saudi%20arabia&SearchConType=1>.

⁷² Saudi Arabia, Question 18 (Form B) and 11f, American Public and U.S. Foreign Policy (Public), August Wave 2, The Gallup Poll: 30 October – 12 November 1986, and 8-11 August 1991, accessed 9 June 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=saudi%20arabia&SearchConType=1>.

⁷³ Saudi Arabia, Question 33v, Foreign Affairs, The Gallup Poll: 18-21 May 2000, accessed 9 June 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=saudi%20arabia&SearchConType=1>.

A 2002 Gallup poll showed that 68 percent of Americans saw Saudis as arrogant, while 75 percent thought they were untrustworthy.⁷⁴ In spite of such views, overall, the favorable ratings of Saudis remained high from the 1940s to the mid 1950s. Post-9/11, there was a drastic shift. The favorability ratings dropped to less than 30 percent.⁷⁵ The details of opinion polls taken on Saudi Arabia during the last fifteen years are as follows:

	Very favorable	Mostly favorable	Mostly unfavorable	Very unfavorable	No opinion
2006 Feb 6–9	3	28	44	18	7
2005 Feb 7–10	3	33	42	16	6
2004 Feb 9–12	3	25	47	19	6
2003 Feb 3–6	3	27	41	20	9
2002 Feb 4–6	4	23	42	22	9
2001 Feb 1–4	7	40	28	18	7
1991 Aug 8–11	11	45	21	12	11

Table 12. Americans' Views of Saudi Arabia (After: Gallup Poll: Perceptions of Foreign Countries, 6–9 February 2006)

9. Kuwait

Kuwait came into the limelight in America in 1990 when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. When asked in February 1991 whether the United States should fight Saddam and drive the Iraqis out of Kuwait, an overwhelming majority of Americans, 79 percent, approved; only 17 percent disapproved.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ March Wave 1: Americans Views of The Muslim World, The Gallup Poll, 1–3 March 2002, accessed 2 June 2006, available at <http://institution.gallup.com.libproxy.nps.navy.mil/documents/questionnaire.aspx?STUDY=P0203008>.

⁷⁵ Perceptions of Foreign Countries, The Gallup Poll, 6-9 February 2006, accessed 3 June 2006, available at <http://institution.gallup.com.libproxy.nps.navy.mil/content/?ci=1624>.

⁷⁶ Kuwait, Question 7, February Wave 3, The Gallup Poll, 14-17 February 1991, accessed 3 June 2006, available at <http://institution.gallup.com.libproxy.nps.navy.mil/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=Kuwait&SearchContentType=1>.

A decade later, an opinion poll conducted by Gallup regarding Americans' views of Islamic countries showed that more Americans held an unfavorable than a favorable opinion. However, a quarter of Americans polled maintained a neutral view. The detailed results are as follows:⁷⁷

	%	#
Very favorable	6.75	58
Somewhat favorable	22.52	194
Neither favorable nor unfavorable	25.51	220
Somewhat unfavorable	22.40	193
Very unfavorable	15.97	138
Don't know	6.26	54
Refused to say	0.59	5

Table 13. Americans' Views of Kuwait (After: Gallup Poll: Americans' View of Muslim Countries, 1–3 March 2002)

A similar poll conducted a year later had better results, showing a net 5 percent positive rating in favor of Kuwait, as indicated by the following:⁷⁸

	%	#
Very favorable	5.67	57
Mostly favorable	41.07	411
Mostly unfavorable	29.58	296
Very unfavorable	12.33	123
Don't know	10.75	108
Refused	0.61	6

Table 14. Americans' Views of Kuwait (From: Gallup Poll: Social Series: World Affairs, 3–6 February 2003)

⁷⁷ March Wave 1: Americans Views of The Muslim World, The Gallup Poll, 1-3 March 2002, accessed 2 June 2006, available at <http://institution.gallup.com.libproxy.nps.navy.mil/documents/questionnaire.aspx?STUDY=P0203008>.

⁷⁸ Kuwait, Question 25W, The Gallup Poll Social Series: World Affairs, The Gallup Poll: 3-6 February 2003, accessed 2 June 2006, available at http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=kuwait&Search_ConType=1&Place=B.

10. The UAE, Yemen, Oman, and Bahrain

The U.S. government continues to maintain cordial yet cautious relations with all these countries. However, there are no opinion polls available to gauge the viewpoint and opinions of the American public.

11. The Palestinian Authority

The conflict between Palestine and Israel is the most contentious issue in the Middle East. Till the late 1960s (as described earlier in our discussion of Egypt) almost 50 percent of Americans tracked what was going on between the Arabs and Israelis. Due to a renewed American interest in the area after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, poll results give a clear picture about the Americans' views of the people of that area. Since then, Americans' opinions have been mostly unfavorable toward the Palestinian Authority and have been consistent in viewing the Israelis as the aggrieved and innocent party. The polls reflect these sentiments.

The trend in Americans' sympathy toward Israel is depicted graphically below. From May 1988 until February 2005, on average, 50 percent of Americans polled showed sympathy for Israel, while only 15 percent on average sympathized with the Palestinians.⁷⁹

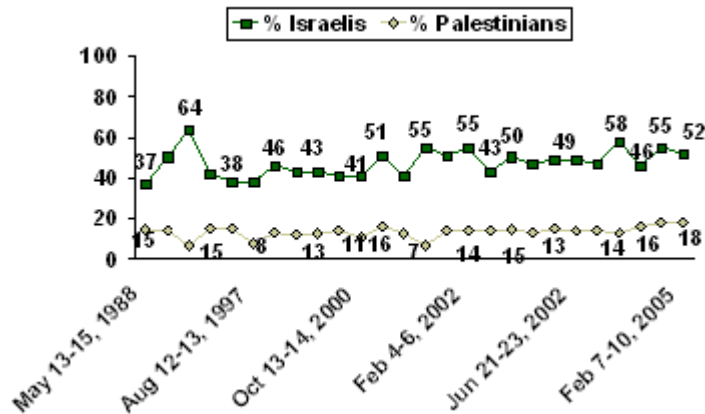


Figure 2. American Sympathies in the Middle East (From: Gallup Poll: Middle East Poll, 7–10 February 2005)

⁷⁹ Jeffery M. Jones, Americans More Positive toward Israelis, Palestinians, The Gallup Poll: 15 February 2005, accessed 23 November 2006, available at <http://institution.gallup.com.libproxy.nps.navy.mil/content/default.aspx?ci=14908>.

Opinion polls concerning the Palestinian authority between 2001 and 2006 replicate the earlier trend. Post-9/11, there has been a further drop of 13 percent in the favorable ratings. However, the net rating remained low and is thus not significant. The detailed results are as follows:⁸⁰

	Very favorable	Mostly favorable	Mostly unfavorable	Very unfavorable	No opinion
2006 Feb 6–9	1	10	49	29	10
2005 Feb 7–10	3	24	43	19	11
2004 Feb 9–12	2	13	44	32	9
2003 Feb 3–6	1	12	44	29	14
2002 Feb 4–6	3	11	44	32	10
2001 Feb 1–4	4	18	39	24	15

Table 15. Americans' Views of Palestinian Authority (After: Gallup Poll: Perceptions of Foreign Countries, 6–9 February 2006)

Another poll shows that Americans realize the significance of the U.S.-Israel relationship for Muslims. In that poll, Americans were asked “whether the U.S. favors Israel too much in the conflict with Arab nations” and whether that “is a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason why Muslims view the U.S. unfavorably.” Sixty-three percent of Americans acknowledged that the Arab-Israel conflict is a “major reason.” The detailed results are shown below:⁸¹

	%	#
Major reason	63.10	544
Minor reason	22.07	190
Not a reason	11.49	99
Don't know	2.92	25
Refused to say	0.41	4

Table 16. U.S. Support of Israel: Why Do Muslims View the U.S. Unfavorably? (From: Gallup Poll: Americans' Views of the Muslim World, 1–3 March 2003)

⁸⁰ Perceptions of Foreign Countries, The Gallup Poll, 6–9 February 2006, accessed 3 June 2006, available at <http://institution.gallup.com.libproxy.nps.navy.mil/content/?ci=1624> (Questions and results from two latest The Gallup polls regarding Hamas and future of Palestine are attached as Appendix F.)

⁸¹ March Wave 1: Americans' Views of Muslim Countries, The Gallup Poll, 1–3 March 2003, accessed 2 June 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/documents/questionnaire.aspx?STUDY=P0203008>.

12. American Views about Arabs in General

In light of the data related to Americans' views of major Muslim countries in the Middle East, it is also important to investigate Americans' views of the major population group in the Middle East – Arabs. Many polls have been conducted to determine American sentiments about Arabs. The results and reviews of two such polls are a key to determine the Americans' views of Arabs. One poll was designed to determine whether an overwhelming majority of Americans believe that Arabs were behind the 9/11 attacks. The poll question and results were as follows:⁸²

- Did Arabs carry out the 9/11 attack?

	%	#
Yes, true	90.22	778
No, not true	7.06	61
Don't know	2.65	23
Refused to answer	0.06	1

Table 17. Did Arabs Carry Out the 9/11 Attack? (From: Gallup Poll: American's View of the Muslim World, 1–3 March 2003)

- A majority of Americans had been wary of Arabs before 9/11, and that point of view still persists today. A September 2001 Gallup-poll review revealed the following:

A review of polling data measuring attitudes toward Arabs over the past decade suggests that the American public has generally held somewhat negative views of Arabs even before the recent terrorist attacks on September 11. Polls conducted since the attacks show that a significant minority of Americans report having become less positive toward Arabs. Additionally, about three out of 10 Americans say that in the last two weeks, they have heard negative comments about Arabs living in the United States, and about half to 60% are willing to support increased security measures aimed specifically at Arabs in the United States.⁸³

⁸² March Wave 1: Americans' Views of Muslim Countries, The Gallup Poll, 1-3 March 2003, accessed 2 June 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/documents/questionnaire.aspx?STUDY=P0203008>.

⁸³ Jeffery M. Jones, Americans Felt Uneasy towards Arab Even before September 11, The Gallup Poll, 28 September 2001, accessed 23 November 2006, available at <http://institution.gallup.com.libproxy.nps.navy.mil/content/default.aspx?ci=4939>.

- In a review carried out by Gallup regarding the image of Arabs pre-9/11. It was found that “a negative image of Arabs existed before the September 11 attacks... majorities of Americans said the following terms applied to Arabs: ‘religious’ (81%), ‘terrorists’ (59%), ‘violent’ (58%), and ‘religious fanatics’ (56%).”⁸⁴
- In another review, “Sixty percent of respondents in an April 1998 New York Times poll agreed that ‘Arab-Americans are more loyal to Arab countries than to the United States,’ while 26% disagreed.”⁸⁵

The above mentioned reports clearly show that Americans view Arabs collectively (as a nation) in a much poorer light than Americans view individual Arab countries.

D. THE MUSLIM WORLD: THE MIDDLE WEST

The term “Middle West” is an arbitrary term selected specifically for this thesis. The region comprises six Muslim-dominated North African countries: Libya, Sudan, Algeria, Tunisia, Niger, and Morocco.⁸⁶ It also includes Nigeria, which has a sizeable Muslim population, approximately 54 million, more than most of the North African Muslim countries. Polling data on Americans’ views of these countries is sparse, although Libya, Morocco, Nigeria, and Sudan, being relatively more important for U.S. interests, do appear occasionally in opinion polls. Therefore, our data in this region is limited.

Morocco is the only country in the region about which a majority of Americans held an unfavorable view.⁸⁷ Otherwise, American polls reveal that the majority of Americans either have no interest or have an unfavorable view of the rest of the countries in the region. No significant data was available on post-9/11 views of Americans regarding this region. A detailed look at each country follows.

1. Libya

Libya is among the countries that were considered a threat by Americans in the mid 1980s. Within that same timeframe Libya fired missiles at U.S. planes over the Gulf of Sidra. In 1986, a number of polls were conducted by Gallup to determine the American public’s opinion about how to deal with the Libyans. Almost 75 percent of Americans felt

⁸⁴ Jeffery M. Jones, Americans Felt Uneasy towards Arab Even before September 11, The Gallup Poll, 28 September 2001, accessed 23 November 2006, available at <http://institution.gallup.com.libproxy.nps.navy.mil/content/default.aspx?ci=4939>.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Map is attached as Appendix C.

⁸⁷ Favorable rating + neutral rating > unfavorable rating.

that retaliatory strikes by the United States were justified. But, at the same time, almost 65 percent were afraid that Libyan President Muammar Kaddafi would retaliate. A poll conducted in October 1986 showed that 56.56 percent of Americans had an extremely cold and unfavorable opinion of Libyans. Eight years later, only 11.61 percent of Americans considered Libya a threat to American security. In that poll, Americans were more wary of Iraq, Iran, and North Korea. Astonishingly, 14.46 percent of Americans (3 percent more than for Libya) were concerned about Japan.

Post-9/11, Libya appeared regularly in the opinion polls. The following table shows that since 9/11, Americans' views toward Libya have remained constant. A unique change occurred in December 2003 after President Muammar Gaddafi gave up his nuclear ambitions. That change was a slight rise in the favorable ratings.

	Very favorable	Mostly favorable	Mostly unfavorable	Very unfavorable	No opinion
2006 Feb 6–9	2	20	42	16	20
2004 Feb 9–12	2	23	43	20	12
2003 Feb 3–6	1	17	39	24	19
2002 Feb 4–6	2	13	41	27	17
2001 Feb 1–4	2	9	40	35	14

Table 18. Americans' Views of Libya (After: Gallup Poll: Perceptions of Foreign Countries, 6–9 February 2006)

2. Morocco

Morocco appeared for the first time in American opinion polls after 9/11. In 2002, 36.67 percent of Americans were neutral about the Moroccans. More Americans had a favorable view of Moroccans (29%) than an unfavorable view (20%). There have been no further polls on Morocco since that time.

3. Nigeria

Nigeria first time appeared in the American Polls in 1969. The first poll was conducted by Gallup to determine Americans' views regarding the independence of Biafra

from Nigeria. Fifty-five percent of Americans didn't know which country to support. Among those who did have an opinion, 36.04 percent favored Biafra's independence from Nigeria, while 8.36 percent opposed it.⁸⁸

In 1986, Americans were asked their feelings about Nigerians. Thirty-four percent of Americans had cold (unfavorable) feelings toward Nigerians. Almost the same number had neutral feelings.⁸⁹ Sixteen percent of the Americans had warm feelings, while almost the same numbers were unfamiliar with Nigeria. When asked about U.S. interests in Nigeria, 42.19 percent of Americans felt that the United States did not have an interest in Nigeria, while 30.92 percent felt that it did.⁹⁰ In a similar poll in 1990, the number of Americans holding an unfavorable opinion had dropped to 29 percent, and those holding a favorable opinion had risen to 21 percent with a majority (39.65%) having a neutral opinion about Nigeria.⁹¹

4. Sudan

In August 1998, the United States planned and executed antiterrorist strikes against Afghanistan and Sudan. Immediately after these strikes, when an American public opinion poll was taken, 65.82 percent of Americans approved of the military attacks in the Sudan.⁹² Only 19.40 percent disapproved of the retaliatory action.

In 2004, ethnic violence in the Darfur region of the Sudan was noted in the world's media. In a Pew survey, Americans were asked whether they were following the news

⁸⁸ Nigeria, The Gallup Poll #779, The Gallup Poll, 1 May 1969, accessed 9 October 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=Nigeria&SearchConType=>.

⁸⁹ Nigeria, Question 17-9, Form B, American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy Poll, The Gallup Poll: 30 October - 12 November 1986, accessed 9 October 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=Nigeria&SearchConType=>.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Nigeria, Question 18bu, American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy Poll, The Gallup Poll, 23 October - 15 November 1990, accessed 9 October 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=Nigeria&SearchConType=>.

⁹² Sudan, Question 5, Anti-Terrorist Air Strike Reaction Poll, The Gallup Poll, 20 August 1998, accessed 9 October 2006, available at <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=Sudan&SearchConType=>.

closely or not. Sixteen percent responded that they were closely following, while 22 percent were following the news fairly closely. Fifty percent of the Americans were not following the news about Sudan closely.⁹³

E. THE MUSLIM WORLD: THE WEST

For the purposes of this thesis, the Muslim West comprises countries in western Europe and North America.⁹⁴ There is a large Muslim diaspora living in Europe. In recent times, events like the 7/7 London bombing, the Danish cartoon issue, the unrest in Paris caused by Muslim youth, and the failed attempt to blow up U.S.-bound airliners have repeatedly brought European Muslims into the limelight. American opinions about some of these events have been polled in the past, but there has been no opinion poll specifically dedicated to showing the American public's views of Muslims in Europe. There have been polls, however, that tell how Americans view Muslims living in America. Those opinions are generally assumed to be a result of person-to-person (social) contact between Americans and Muslims living either temporarily or permanently, as citizens, in the United States.

American Muslims now comprise a sizeable minority in the United States. Americans in areas where there are a number of Muslims tend to have the best opinions about American Muslims. American Muslims come mostly from south-Asian countries and are reasonably well educated. They earn a fairly good amount of money primarily through managerial and professional jobs.

Polling data on American Muslims, Muslims in general, and Islam show that Americans view the three separately. Americans have the best opinions about their fellow Americans who are Muslims, while Islam has the least favorable ratings. Polls also show that the ratings differ according to several aspects: age, education, region, and political party. Americans who are younger (<30 years), college graduates, from the eastern and central United States, and Independents hold better views of Muslims and Islam than others in the same categories.

⁹³ May 2006 U.S. Global Attitudes Project Survey, P-2d, Pew Research Center, 2-14 May 2006, accessed 10 October 2006, available at <http://people-press.org/reports/questionnaires/277.pdf>.

⁹⁴ Map is attached as Appendix D.

1. American Muslims

Estimates of the Muslim population in the United States range from one million to seven million. In 2001, according to the *World Almanac*, there were 5.8 million Muslims in the United States.⁹⁵ That estimate was close to the average of all the estimates given by various organizations. A 2001 American Muslim poll carried out by Zogby International in association with Project MAPS (Muslims in the American Public Square) and with the support of the Pew Charitable Trust revealed the following data.⁹⁶

- The maximum number of Muslims (39%) lived in the eastern United States. Twenty-seven percent lived in the Central / Great Lakes region, while 21 percent and 13 percent of Muslims lived in south and west of the country, respectively.
- South-Asian Muslims had the largest population percentage (32%), Arabs constituted 26 percent,⁹⁷ while Afro-American Muslims made up 20 percent.
- Fifty-eight percent of the Muslims were at least college graduates, while 24 percent had attended some college at one time.
- Half of the Muslims in the United States earned more than \$50,000 per annum.
- The majority of Muslims held managerial, medical, or professional positions.
- Only 12 percent of Muslims had migrated before 1970. Sixty percent had migrated after 1980.

Post-9/11, a separate poll was conducted to determine American Muslims' views of other Muslims and Arabs. Fifty-seven percent of American Muslims had an unfavorable attitude toward other Muslims and Arabs.⁹⁸ More than half (51%) of American Muslims supported military action in Afghanistan, while 66 percent agreed with President Bush's assertion that the war was being fought against terrorism and not Islam.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Abdul Malik Mujahid, *Muslims in America: Profile 2001*, accessed 20 October 2006, available at <http://www.soundvision.com/info/yearinreview/2001/profile.asp>.

⁹⁶ American Muslim Poll, Zogby International, November/December 2001, accessed 20 October 2006, available at <http://www.projectmaps.com/pmreport.pdf>. A total of 1781 American Muslims were interviewed. The margin of error declared was 2.4%.

⁹⁷ According to a few studies, Arabs are only 12 percent of the American Muslim population.

⁹⁸ Latest data not available. Due to the present situation in Iraq, and recent crisis in Middle East, there are chances that the unfavorable attitude may be even lower.

⁹⁹ American Muslim Poll, Zogby International, November/December 2001, accessed 20 October 2006, available at <http://www.projectmaps.com/pmreport.pdf>.

The opinions of the American public toward Muslim Americans was polled for the first time in 2002, by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.¹⁰⁰ Muslim Americans were rated favorably by 54 percent of the public. In 2001, the rating had been less than 50 percent. The details of the survey were as follows:

Opinion of	Favorable (%)	Unfavorable (%)	Can't Rate (%)
Protestants	74	8	18
Catholics	74	13	13
Jews	74	9	17
Evangelical Christians	55	18	27
Muslim-Americans	54	22	24
People who aren't religious	51	30	19
Muslims	47	29	24
Atheists	34	54	12

Table 19. Americans' Views of Religion at Home (After: The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2002)

In the same survey, the opinion of younger respondents (<30 yrs) about American Muslims was more positive (57%), compared to older respondents (51%).¹⁰¹ Similarly, the respondents that had a better knowledge of Islam had correspondingly more favorable ratings of Muslims (65%), compared to those who had less knowledge of Islam (40%).¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Andrew Kohut, Americans Struggle with Religion's Role at Home and Abroad, Pew Research Center, and The Pew Forum, 20 March 2002, accessed 10 October 2006, available at <http://www.people-press.org> and <http://www.pewforum.org>.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Andrew Kohut, Americans Struggle with Religion's Role at Home and Abroad, Pew Research Center, and The Pew Forum, 20 March 2002, accessed 10 October 2006, available at <http://www.people-press.org> and <http://www.pewforum.org>, p. 19.

Region-wise, Midwestern Americans had the best opinion of American Muslims (61%). Americans in the South had the lowest favorable rating, which was 50 percent.¹⁰³ Among the political parties, Independents had a better view of American Muslims (60%), compared to Republicans (56%).¹⁰⁴

2. American Views of Muslims and Islam

The survey conducted by Pew in 2002 was very comprehensive. It also included the American public's opinion of "other Muslims" (with no reference to nationality) and of Islam. Muslims rated better than Islam. Younger, better- educated, Eastern and Western, and Independent Americans had better views of Muslims and Islam than others in the same categories. Salient ratings from the survey were as follows:¹⁰⁵

Opinion of Americans		Muslims (in general)			Islam		
		Fav (%)	Unfav (%)	Can't rate (%)	Fav (%)	Unfav (%)	Can't rate (%)
In general		47	29	24	38	33	28
Age	<30 yrs	57	26	17	51	29	20
Education	College	61	24	15	52	31	17
	<HS Grad	30	35	35	26	34	40
Region	East	55	29	16	43	27	30
	Midwest	47	27	26	35	31	34
	South	41	31	28	32	39	29
	West	49	25	26	45	29	26
Party ID	Republican	44	32	24	37	42	21
	Democrat	50	29	21	39	30	31
	Independent	51	27	22	40	32	28

Table 20. Americans' Views of Muslims and Islam (After: The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2002)

A similar survey was carried out by Pew after the 7/7/2005 bombing in London, to again determine the American public's views regarding Islam and American Muslims.

¹⁰³ Andrew Kohut, Americans Struggle with Religion's Role at Home and Abroad, Pew Research Center, and The Pew Forum, 20 March 2002, accessed 10 October 2006, available at <http://www.people-press.org> and <http://www.pewforum.org>, p. 30.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Andrew Kohut, Americans Struggle with Religion's Role at Home and Abroad, Pew Research Center, and The Pew Forum, 20 March 2002, accessed 10 October 2006, available at <http://www.people-press.org> and <http://www.pewforum.org>, 14.

The survey results were similar. Slight changes were seen in the South's improved view of American Muslims, and Democrats jumped in their rankings of American Muslims and Islam.¹⁰⁶

Opinion of Americans		American- Muslims			Islam		
		Fav (%)	Unfav (%)	Can't rate (%)	Fav (%)	Unfav (%)	Can't rate (%)
In general		55	25	20	39	36	25
Age	<30 yrs	62	25	13	43	38	19
Education	College	65	15	20	53	29	18
	<HS Grad	41	37	22	23	45	32
Region	East	60	20	20	45	29	26
	Midwest	53	29	18	36	35	29
	South	54	27	19	36	41	23
	West	53	20	27	40	36	24
Party ID	Republican	48	30	22	32	46	22
	Democrat	61	21	18	47	31	22
	Independent	55	25	20	42	33	25

Table 21. Americans' Views of Muslims and Islam (After: The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2005)

At the end of 2005, Gallup also conducted a series of polls to gauge the American public's view of Islam and Muslims. The polling results showed that a majority of Americans (32%) did not admire anything about Muslims. Those who saw something to appreciate (22%) admired Muslims for their faithfulness to and sincerity in their religious beliefs. Most Americans (33%) considered "extremism/radicalism/not open to ideas" as the least admirable quality of Muslims. A majority of Americans did not feel angry toward Muslims and were eager to have improved relations with the Muslim world. Almost 50 percent of Americans thought Islam was as violent as other religions. Most Americans believed that Muslims did not respect American values, while the Americans who did take a fair position toward Muslims respected Islamic values. A good number of Americans

¹⁰⁶ Views of Muslim Americans Hold Steady after London Bombings, Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 26 July 2005, accessed 20 October 2006, available at <http://pewforum.org/publications/surveys/muslims-survey-2005.pdf>.

felt that Muslims' opinions of Americans meant a great deal or a moderate amount to them. Americans thought that most Muslims had an unfavorable view of Americans, whereas Americans' views were either neutral or favorable.

Recently, the Pew Forum conducted another survey that vindicated the results of the Gallup poll to quite an extent. In this survey, Americans felt that Muslims were violent, fanatical, and intolerant. But, at the same time, Americans found Muslims to be morally correct, humble, altruistic, not greedy, and devout. Consolidated results of the study are as shown:

Muslims are....	Yes, associate (%)	No, do not associate (%)	Don't know / Refused (%)
Immoral	19	65	16
Arrogant	35	53	12
Selfish	27	56	17
Violent	45	42	13
Greedy	24	60	16
Fanatical	43	41	16
Honest	44	36	20
Generous	26	50	24
Devout	67	18	14
Tolerant	28	58	15

Table 22. Poll: Traits Americans Associate with Muslims (From: 13-Nation Pew Global Attitudes Survey, 22 June 2006)

F. SUMMARY

For years, polls and surveys have been an effective way of determining the American public's opinion on various issues of national and international significance. The oldest available records have been archived by the Gallup Organization.

In 1947, Turkey was the first Muslim country to appear in an American poll. Middle East Muslim countries have dominated the polls, mainly due to the Middle East conflict. Since the Iranian revolution of 1979, polling data on Iran has also been extensive. Iraq has been included in American polls regularly since 1991. The rest of the Muslim

World has appeared in American Polls sporadically, depending on regional events and their significance to the United States. There are a few countries in the Middle-West region (North Africa) about which Americans have never been polled.

Since September 11, 2001, polling has been regularly conducted on all major Muslim countries. In addition, American Muslims' views of other Muslims, and Americans' views of American Muslims have been polled for the first time. Americans hold American Muslims in higher regard than they hold Islam, which they hold in the lowest regard. Different categories within the American community view Muslims and Islam separately.

Except for Saudi Arabia and Indonesia, post-9/11 American views of Muslims countries have remained within the overall rating, that is, the favorable remained favorable and the unfavorable remained unfavorable. Post-9/11, the Americans' views of Saudi Arabia deteriorated, while that of Indonesia improved.

III. DATA ANALYSIS

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyzes the polling data and surveys described in the preceding chapter. In the first section, key points for each region are highlighted; the second part consists of a detailed discussion of the American views of the Muslim World derived from the data.

The polling data from the past – in some cases, as long ago as fifty years – included in this thesis reveals two important aspects: 1) figures/percentages for categories such as approval/disapproval, favor/oppose, yes/no, etc.; and 2) the particular issues, situations/incidents, and concepts, and the countries and personalities, etc., that necessitated extraction of these figures/numbers. These polls are not only indicative of choices made by people. In a democratic society like the US, they are a means of assessment for the government to know how the people are viewing any subject or issue. For politicians, it may mean the next election; for the Government, it may mean revisiting policies; for the people, it definitely means a prosperous and secure life, for themselves and their posterity.

The first question to be asked about polls is, “Are polls accurate, even when a sample population is interviewed?” One way to address this question is to study both comparative polls from various sources that cover the same issue and subsequent polls taken by the original organization on the same issue. Assuming that the polling organizations interview different people each time, this process can provide a useful validation of the polls’ authenticity and accuracy. In addition, polling organizations usually include the margin of error with each poll, which typically ranges between 1 and 3 percent.

B. KEY DATA POINTS: THE EAST

U.S. interaction with countries in this region began after WWII. The polls suggest that, between the 1950s and the 1970s, Muslim countries in the region were neither thought to be friendly nor considered trustworthy by Americans. The countries favored

most by the American public were the Philippines and Japan. Although, at the time, India had the third-largest Muslim population, the secular Indian government fared better in the views of Americans than the governments of the other Muslim nations.

One probable reason for this is that Americans generally lacked knowledge about the Muslim countries. The interest of Americans in these countries would typically remain minimal until a significant event occurred, after which information on a countries would become more accessible for Americans. This factor is most evident in recent polls showing a favorable rating of Indonesia. Before the deadly Tsunami hit Indonesia in December 2004, less than a quarter of Americans had a favorable view of Indonesia, a rating that had been consistent for forty years. After the Tsunami, the only poll that considered Americans' views toward Indonesia showed that more than half of the Americans polled possessed a favorable view of Indonesia. Incidentally, the same was true about Indonesians' general view of Americans.

Americans' perceptions of a few countries in the region have remained proportionally the same during the entire period of American interaction. Afghanistan and Pakistan are good examples. Afghanistan and Pakistan have appeared frequently in polls of the American public, and Americans' majority view of these countries has never been good. This means that, although they have been important to U.S. foreign policy – either as allies or as impediments – the American people have remained wary of both countries. The situation today is the best example of this.

Afghanistan is under the control of a U.S.-backed, democratic government that currently receives full diplomatic, military, and economic support from the West, especially the United States. Pakistan also is a key ally of the United States in the “war against terror.” And, in their recent visits to the United States, the presidents of both these countries have conducted what could be considered a public diplomacy campaign.¹⁰⁷ Yet barely a quarter of Americans have a favorable opinion of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

¹⁰⁷ President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan and President Pervaiz Musharraf of Pakistan visited American in October 2006 and held various lectures, presentations, and dialogues with intellectuals and on TV.

In contrast, Americans have always viewed India favorably compared to the other Muslim countries in the East. Between the 1950s and '70s, although India was openly aligned with Russia, while Pakistan was aligned with the United States, India was still considered more trustworthy and friendly than Pakistan. India's favorable rating started improving after the 1970s. It may be due to a greater number of Indian immigrants coming into the United States and consequently increased interaction, or it may be due to the active participation of Indians in the political sphere within the United States.¹⁰⁸ After 1994, India's favorable ratings jumped considerably. This was most likely due to the improved U.S.-India strategic relationship. In recent polls, almost two-thirds of Americans hold a favorable view of India.

There is also a large number of Indian Muslims who have settled in America. And the main question remaining is whether Americans' views of India include this large majority of Indian Muslims.¹⁰⁹ While the answer cannot be determined, except through a separate poll conducted for that specific purpose, it seems possible that Indian Muslims are typically thought of as Indians first and Muslims last. One example that supports this argument is the case of the large Muslim minority living in Israel. The Americans' view of Israel does not appear to factor in the Muslims living there.

Malaysia has seldom appeared in American polls. This is quite interesting, given that Dr. Mahatir, the former Malaysian prime minister, has been very critical of America and Israel. This may be due to two things: either that Malaysia does not threaten U.S. interests, or that the Malaysian diaspora in the United States is relatively small. In American Muslims polls, there is no mention of Malaysian immigrants.¹¹⁰ Therefore, less interaction with, knowledge of, and information about Malaysians and Malaysia may be the cause of Americans not having an opinion regarding Malaysia. Bangladesh's absence from American Public polls may be due to similar reasons.

¹⁰⁸ Brief History of Indian Immigration to America, accessed 2 November 2006, available at http://www.aifl.org/awards/ahp_0203_essay.htm.

¹⁰⁹ As discussed in Chapter II, India has the third largest population of Muslims.

¹¹⁰ Malaysians may be a part of the "others" group.

C. KEY DATA POINTS: THE MIDDLE EAST

As per the polls, the Middle Eastern countries seemed to become more important to the American public in and since the 1950s. During this time, the nation-states in the Middle East, barring Turkey and Iran, were in a transitional phase. It may be that media reporting from these areas had not fully matured and, therefore, not many Americans knew what was happening there. One 1955 poll regarding the Egypt-Israel situation revealed that only 50 percent of Americans were following the news. This figure suggests either a lack of information or a lack of American interest. Therefore, the media revolution in the past few decades has had a definite affect on how Americans view Middle East countries.

Depending on world events and U.S. interest in the area, Americans' views of all the Middle Eastern Muslim countries had been fluctuating for a long time. The major effect was a sudden drop in favorable opinion following any event, particularly if the issue was close to the hearts of Americans. For instance, in the case of Syria, polls have remained quite steady, whereas, for Egypt, during the 1973 Arab-Israel conflict, there was a sharp increase of unfavorable opinion among Americans. Similarly, in the case of Iran, in 1979, there was a sharp increase in unfavorable opinion following the overthrow of Shah Reza Pahlavi. However, the unfavorable opinion seemed due more to the hostage crisis than the revolution. Similarly, since 9/11, the opinion polls show no significant change in Americans' perspective regarding Iraq, Iran, Turkey, or Jordan. As the 9/11 terrorists came mainly from Egypt and Saudi Arabia, those countries dropped in the favorable opinion of Americans.

The most drastic change is that of Saudi Arabia. The Americans' view changed radically from favorable to unfavorable. The question, of course, is Why? If we consider the way that Americans viewed Muslims, Islam, and Arabs, and the fact that Arabs – particularly those belonging to the Hejaz area, present-day Saudi Arabia – were intuitively taken to represent the face of Islam, then the drop in favorability seems natural. Moreover, given that Osama Bin Laden, a Saudi national, was the mastermind behind the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the drop in Americans' favorable view toward Saudi Arabia seem natural

and understandable. While we could interpret the drop in the favorable opinion of the Saudis in isolation, it is more practical to consider the Americans' view in this instance in a broader context, that is, in the context of their view of the Muslim World overall.¹¹¹

It is also interesting in this regard to consider Americans' feelings toward Arabs as a nation. A majority of Americans are very skeptical about Arabs. Americans not only dislike Arabs but also perceive them to be arrogant, unfriendly and untrustworthy. Post-9/11 surveys indicate that Americans see second- and third-generation Americans with an Arab heritage as Arabs first and Americans second. This shows that, in the case of Arabs, Americans find their nation-state identity very important. (This aspect will be clarified in our subsequent discussion of American Muslims.)

At times, Americans' views of a country accord with a particular state-to-state diplomatic relationship. For instance, Egypt's peace treaty with Israel in 1973 improved U.S.-Egypt diplomatic and military relations. Opinion polls for that period show a similar change in the way Americans viewed Egyptians. However, in a few cases, opinion polls show a difference between the apparent warmth of U.S. diplomatic relations with another country and Americans' opinions of that country. For example, when opinion polls reflected Americans' support of Turkey's inclusion in NATO, U.S.-Turkey relations also were extremely cordial. But when Americans were asked whether the United States should defend Turkey if it was attacked by a communist country, a majority of Americans polled said that the United States should stay out of any such conflict. Another example is Lebanon. The U.S. government supported Lebanon's efforts to attain political independence and later maintained good diplomatic relations with Lebanon. As a result, the Lebanese view of Americans has always been highly favorable. Still, in opinion polls pertaining to Middle East countries, Americans rated Lebanon last. Similar American sentiments were repeated recently during the Israel-Hezbollah crisis of July-September 2006. While a majority of Americans remained neutral, more than 30 percent sided with Israel. Less than one percent of Americans chose Hezbollah, which represented Lebanon in the crisis. One reason for such American views is America's passionate friendship with Israel, which apparently overwhelmed all other political and governmental relationships.

¹¹¹ See Chapter II. Most Westerners see Arabs, particularly the Saudis, as a typical example of Muslims. While they may be better Muslims than rest of the Muslim world, they are not the only ones.

The polls indicate that Americans also react at times to relatively small incidents of public interest. In the case of Turkey, for instance, the American public's favorable opinion of Turkey dropped following Turkey's refusal to allow U.S. forces to use its military bases for the U.S. invasion of Iraq. This occurred despite the fact that Turkey has long been a strong ally of the United States and that it has a democratically elected, secular government. Nevertheless, the democratic decision to deny the use of its military bases to the United States resulted in a drop in the American public's favorable opinion of Turkey.

D. KEY DATA POINTS: THE MIDDLE WEST

American polls on the Middle West Muslim region are very limited. Only four countries from that region have ever appeared in polls: Libya, Nigeria, Morocco, and Sudan. All four have been of some interest at various times to the media and the American public.

For example, Libya caught Americans' attention when, in March 1986, it fired a missile at a U.S. aircraft in the Gulf of Sidra, and when, on April 5, 1986, Libya was allegedly involved in a terrorist attack in Berlin that killed two American soldiers and injured seventy-nine American civilians.¹¹² President Reagan quickly retaliated with air and naval strikes on Tripoli and Benghazi. As a result of this engagement and Muammar Gaddafi's alleged involvement in most of the airline hijackings and terrorist attacks at the time, Americans had a very bleak view of the Libyans. Polls in the 1980s, along with those taken recently (2000–2006), clearly depict the effects of that era. A majority of Americans today maintain almost the same unfavorable opinion about Libya as they did in the 1980s.

One interesting observation from the polling data for Libya is that only 11.61 percent of Americans in 1994 considered Libya a threat to the United States. That was 3 percent less than for Japan. This suggests that Americans' opinions of a country are not always associated with how significant a threat that country poses to the United States. Japan, for example, has maintained a high favorable rating throughout its post-WWII relationship with the United States. Conversely, Libya remains low in the ratings, whether

¹¹² Mark E. Kosnik, *The Military Response to Terrorism*, accessed 26 October 2006, available at <http://www.iwar.org.uk/cyberterror/resources/mil-response/response.html>.

Americans consider it a threat to the United States or not. The only positive change in the ratings came after December 2003, when Libya shelved its nuclear program. This shows Americans' quick response to world events, particularly after 9/11, and, more so, when a world event occurs in or is related to a Muslim country.

Compared to all the other Middle East countries, Americans' views about Moroccans have been better. A majority of Americans have neutral views toward Morocco, and more than one third have a favorable view. This pattern seems to follow the United States' foreign-policy intentions to maintain good relations with Morocco's king. Although Morocco has a democratically elected government, King Muhammad VI maintains ultimate control.¹¹³ Nonetheless, the U.S. government seems comfortable with this "monarchial democracy." And the American public's view is in accord with this accommodation, even though such a democracy is not fully in line with the American public's democratic values.

Another important aspect regarding Morocco is the involvement of Moroccans in various terrorist activities, at home, in Europe, and in the United States. In Morocco in 2003, fourteen suicide bombers attacked five Western and Jewish targets. On November 24, 2004, Mohammed Bouyeri, a Dutch Moroccan killed Theo van Gogh, a Dutch filmmaker. In 2005, a French Moroccan, Zacarias Moussaoui, was convicted of conspiracy in connection with the terrorist attacks on 9/11 and was sentenced to life in prison.¹¹⁴

The Moroccan Government has been a close ally of the United States in its effort to fight terrorism at home and to control the political fallout in Europe and around the world. Although the Moroccan government maintains close ties with the United States, the Moroccan people apparently do not entirely support that relationship. A poll conducted by Zogby in 1994 indicated that 88 percent of Moroccans considered U.S. foreign policy to be the main reason for their negative attitude toward America. In 2000, polls conducted by Pew indicated that 77 percent of Moroccans had a favorable view of the United States.

¹¹³ Carol Migdalovitz, Morocco: Current Issues, CRS Report for Congress, January 2005, accessed 26 October 2006, available at <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS21579.pdf>.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

The figure dropped to 27 percent in 2003.¹¹⁵ This data indicates that in a few cases, the American public's view of a country may be relatively better due to U.S. foreign policy interests, even though the public of the other country does not have a favorable view of Americans. This cannot be called an overall trend in American views, because the same does not hold true for countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia.

Nigeria is the most populated country in the Middle West region. It has a sizeable population of Muslims (50%), but the country does not consider itself an Islamic state. Since Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999, U.S. relations with Nigeria have continuously improved.¹¹⁶ The limited number of polls showing how Americans view Nigeria indicates that a majority of Americans' view of Nigerians is neutral. And the percentage of people having either a favorable or an unfavorable opinion is roughly the same. These views are also reflected by polls that inquire about the United States' interest in Nigeria. Most of the Americans polled didn't think that the United States had any interest in Nigeria. Therefore, we concluded that Americans' feelings toward Nigerians in the latter poll, as in the former, were mostly neutral. Whether Americans view Nigerians as Muslims or not was difficult to determine, as no polls has been conducted on that specific issue.

Data on Americans' opinions toward Sudan is also limited. In 1998, the year of the U.S. retaliatory strikes against Sudan, few polls were conducted to determine whether the American public approved, disapproved, or was neutral. More recent polls on Sudan are designed to determine how much importance Americans give to the situation in the Darfur region. The resulting data reveals that Americans' views are very cold toward the Sudanese. No data or polls have been conducted to determine whether the Sudanese are considered a threat to U.S. interests, or whether Americans think of Sudan as a country that supports Jihadists or terrorists.

Overall, Americans' views regarding the Middle West suffer from a lack of U.S. interest in the region and limited interaction between Americans and the people of the

¹¹⁵ Carol Migdalovitz, Morocco: Current Issues, CRS Report for Congress, January 2005, accessed 26 October 2006, available at <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS21579.pdf>.

¹¹⁶ Ted Dagane, Nigeria in Political Transition, CRS Report for Congress, July 2005, accessed 26 October 2006, available at <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/71824.pdf>.

region. With the exception of Libya, the polls do not indicate whether Americans' views of the inhabitants of that area have anything to do with the inhabitants being Muslim. At the same time, there is no data that disproves such an assumption either.

E. KEY DATA POINTS: THE WEST

Due to a lack of data on Europe, this section on the Western Muslim World will only include a discussion of Americans' views of Muslims in America, whether temporary or permanent. From an analytical point of view, this is the most important region, because the opinions developed by Americans are assumed therefore to be a result of first-hand interaction with the U.S. Muslim population.

That population is concentrated mostly in the Eastern and Central/Great Lakes regions, which are within well-developed areas of the United States. Contrary to the general belief that the Muslim population in the United States is Arab-dominated, most American Muslims have a South-Asian ancestry. The majority are also college graduates. Managerial, medical, and other professional occupations are the more popular fields of employment within the U.S. Muslim community. Half of this population earns more than \$50,000 per annum. Therefore, by all standards, American Muslims seem well settled in the United States and do not appear to lag behind or to be out of sync with the rest of U.S. society, in contrast to Muslims in Europe and Australia.

American Muslims' views of the Muslim World were polled for the first time after 9/11, in November-December 2001. Amazingly, at that time, a majority had an unfavorable view of the Muslim World and of Arabs. Most of American Muslims were supportive of the U.S. military action in Afghanistan, considered the action well justified, and did not consider it as a war against Islam.

In this regard, the polling data suggests that the views of American Muslims were politically more aggressive than the views of other Americans. In a March 2002 poll, three months after the first American-Muslim poll, only 29 percent of Americans held an unfavorable view of Muslims, as compared to the 57 percent of American Muslims. In comparison to Americans of other religions, Americans rated American Muslims almost as high as evangelical Christians.¹¹⁷ Protestants, Catholics, and Jews shared the most

¹¹⁷ Evangelical Christians are not very popular among Americans in general.

favorable ratings (74%). However, American Muslims received the maximum unfavorable ratings among the religious groups categorized. Younger, educated Americans having some knowledge of Islam held better views of American Muslims. Regionally, Americans in the East and Midwest viewed American Muslims better than other regions. American Muslims were least liked in the South; although even there, half of Southern Americans polled had a favorable opinion of American Muslims. Among the political parties, Democrats had a better opinion of American Muslims than Republicans did. Independents also maintained a better view. These results may indicate at least two important factors: 1) American Muslims fare better in places where they are more populous and thus are better known; and 2) a greater knowledge of Islam and Muslims correlates into better ratings.

The same 2002 poll revealed yet another interesting aspect: respondents viewed American Muslims differently than they viewed the rest of the Muslim World. With the exception of younger Americans (<30 yrs), who had identical view toward both groups, all of the identified sections of American society – identified by geographic region and political party – held better views of American Muslims than of Muslims in general. The difference in most case was not drastic, but it did show that Americans tend to consider other Americans, regardless of their cultural or religious differences, better than citizens of other countries. This point was also highlighted in discussion of Americans' views of Arabs.

A similar Pew survey in 2005 showed just about the same results, with a slight improvement in the favorable ratings, roughly in all domains. The only major change was an improved favorable rating of American Muslims in the Eastern United States. Measured over time, this view of American Muslims improved slightly, but not substantially. Since 2000, with less than 50 percent of Americans in the East holding favorable views of American Muslims prior to 9/11, the overall favorable rating of American Muslims improved to 55 percent in the last poll taken in 2005.

A Gallup poll in December 2005, using the terms “Muslims” and “Muslim countries” interchangeably in the questionnaire, inquired about Americans' feelings toward Muslims. The poll results indicate that respondents associated Muslims with their countries of origin. Thus, the opinions may not be indicative only of the personal

interaction of Americans with Muslims in the United States. They may be a mix of Americans' feelings toward Muslims they have met and Muslims in Islamic countries that they have heard about on the radio or from TV or read about.

The poll also revealed that a majority of Americans did not feel angry toward Muslims; rather Americans were eager to improve relations with Muslim countries. An overwhelming majority of Americans thought that Muslims viewed Americans unfavorably. Half of this majority had similar unfavorable feelings toward Muslim countries. The greatest number of Americans believed that theirs was a fair position in regard to Muslim countries and were respectful to Islamic values, whereas they believed that Muslims were not respectful of American values. A majority of Americans either admired nothing about Muslims or had no opinion. Those who did find something admirable found Muslims' faithfulness to and sincerity in their religious beliefs admirable. A majority of Americans thought that either "extremism," "radicalism," or "not open to ideas" was the least admirable quality among Muslims. All these results together indicate an underlying frustration among Americans: they consider themselves more forthcoming in their willingness to improve the situation, but perceive an opposite response to such efforts by Muslims.

A recent 2006 Pew survey regarding a humanistic view of Muslims provides new insights into how Americans view Muslims as members of American society. The survey assumed there was personal interaction between Americans and Muslims. According to the survey, most Americans believe that Muslims are selfish, violent, fanatical, tightfisted, and intolerant. At the same time, most Americans believe that Muslims are not immoral, arrogant, greedy, or dishonest. A large majority also acknowledges that Muslims are devout in their religion. The survey thus validates the poll analysis presented in the preceding paragraph. The major concerns of Americans are still extremism, radicalism, and intolerance. Their acknowledgment of good qualities also hints at the present comfort level of the Americans vis-à-vis Muslims, that is, Muslims have no gravely inferior aspect that makes them alien to or incompatible with American society.

Even so, Americans' views of Islam as a religion or system differed from their views regarding American Muslims and Muslims in general. In regard to this, polls

conducted in 2002 and 2005 are very significant. The results of both polls indicate that a majority of Americans at the time held a favorable view of Islam, and the difference between the favorable and unfavorable ratings was not significant. However, a significant number of respondents (25%) either held no opinion or could not rate Islam. According to the 2005 poll, in the three years between 2002 and 2005, the “no opinion”/“can’t rate” responses were the same. This may mean either that the respondents in both 2002 and 2005 did not have sufficient knowledge of Islam to form an opinion, or that the respondents had an opinion but did not want to indicate it.

In the 2002 Pew survey, younger Americans (<30 yrs) rated Islam more favorably than older Americans did. Interestingly, the opinions of the more educated (college students) were favorable toward Islam, while the majority of high-school-only graduates rated Islam unfavorably. Except for the South, the majority of Americans in the other three regions of the United States held a favorable view of Islam. Almost 40 percent of Americans in the South had an unfavorable view of Islam.¹¹⁸ Among the political parties, the majority of Republicans rated Islam unfavorably, while the majority of Democrats and Independents held favorable views of Islam.

There were two more important observations in this poll. First, in contrast to other polls, the difference between the favorable and the unfavorable ratings was not very large. Second, the percentage of respondents who chose to “not rate” Islam was approximately 20 percent. This figure is similar to the percentage indicated for the same category in the preceding paragraph.

In the 2005 Pew survey, Americans’ views of Islam were similar to those of 2002, except that the unfavorable ratings increased slightly. The trend of “can’t rate” was also similar. This suggests that, in spite of events related to the Islamic world between 2002 and 2005, Americans’ views of Islam did not change.

¹¹⁸ This is, incidentally, the area where Muslims are least in number.

F. AMERICANS' VIEWS OF THE MUSLIM WORLD

Key aspects of the data from all four regions of the Muslim World suggest that Americans view the Muslim World from three different perspectives: Individual, State, and System.¹¹⁹

1. Individual

Looking at the polls and surveys of the last five years, that is, since the September 11, 2001, attacks, it is clear that Americans have a different opinion of Muslims who are citizens of the United States than they do about Muslims who are not considered “Americans.” The latter group is not clearly defined. It may comprise either Muslims with whom Americans have interacted in person or Muslims whom Americans have only heard about or seen. A third possibility is some combination of both, which is more likely, because the polls and surveys include a wide variety of people. However, regardless of the various types of respondents and the different experiences they represent, one thing is glaringly obvious from the data overall: Americans have a better opinion of Americans per se than of any other nationality. This general result suggests that Americans view the world through a “nationalistic” lens: “whoever they are and whatever they do, they are Americans first and foremost”.

Among the general citizenry of the United States, however, Americans tend to view Muslims as highly as they view evangelical Christians, 54 percent and 55 percent, respectively.¹²⁰ Both religious groups are higher in the favorable ratings than those who “do not believe in God,” are “non-American Muslims,” or are “Atheists.” Favorable ratings for those three categories (separately) are below 50 percent. Catholics, Protestants, and Jews are viewed favorably by three-fourths of Americans. These results show clearly that Americans also apply a “religious” lens, especially at the final level of opinion. Therefore, to be more favorably perceived by more than half of the American public, a

¹¹⁹ This idea was derived from Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis*.

¹²⁰ Evangelical Christians, Wikipedia, accessed 31 October 2006, available at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelicalism> (As per Wikipedia, evangelical Christians believe in proselytizing, believe that the Bible is the literal word of God, and believe in the relevance of Christian faith in cultural issues.)

person must be a citizen of the United States. Yet even if a person is a U.S. citizen, if he is a Muslim also, he will be viewed today as a member of the least-favorable monotheist religion.

No data is available on Americans' views of Christians or Jews throughout the rest of the world. Therefore, without supporting data, we cannot determine whether Americans differentiate between American Catholics and European Catholics, or between American Jews and Israeli Jews, etc. The analysis in the preceding paragraph is valid therefore only in regard to American's views of Muslims and only within the purview of the polls and surveys discussed in this thesis.

2. State

In regard to states, Americans' views vary greatly. However, for all of the regions we discuss, one consistent theme has emerged: Muslim States are consistently low on the favorability scale in comparison with non-Muslim states in the same region.¹²¹

Americans' preferences among the Muslim states vary in keeping with three broad principles:

- threat perceptions about the state,
- U.S. strategic interests in the state, and
- the state's relations with U.S.-friendly countries.

If for Americans, the Muslim state under discussion is a threat to the US, like Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia etc, then the Americans' views of that state are not favorable. The states that are not perceived as threats by the Americans are normally not a part of the polling / survey questionnaire. Malaysia, the Central Asian states, and countries in the Middle West are examples of this exclusion. For states that have been considered a threat at some time in the past or that have been the site of a negative incident in the past, Americans' views have been and remain generally low. Even if the bilateral situation between the United States and the Muslim state improves, the overall favorability rating tends to remain low. This tendency possibly shows either that Americans remember their history or that the historical view is passed from generation to generation.

¹²¹ See Appendix E.

If a country is not considered a threat to the United States and the U.S. government associates strategic importance with that country – as is the case with Turkey, for example – Americans’ view of the country is generally favorable. However, according to the data even when the U.S. government considers a country strategically important or an ally, if the American public considers that country a threat, Americans continue to maintain an unfavorable opinion of that country. Pakistan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq are all examples. This data shows why American policy is consistent in some cases and inconsistent in others. When the American public does not support government policies toward a country, the application of those policies is inconsistent. When the public agrees with the government policies toward a country, however, the application of those policies is usually consistent. In some instances of the latter, U.S. foreign policy may first follow an unpopular course for some time due to strategic interests, but it quickly comes back into alignment with public opinion once U.S. interests recede. While the international community sometimes calls this inconsistent behavior “U.S. Hypocrisy,” our analysis suggests that the inconsistency reflects the U.S. government’s attempt to remain aligned with American public sentiment.

When a Muslim state is considered a threat to a state friendly to the United States, Americans tend to hold an unfavorable view of the Muslim country. Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt (before 1973), and Syria are examples. However, if a Muslim country changes its stance towards the U.S.-friendly state, then American public opinion generally follows. Egypt, after 1973 when it changed its policy toward Israel, is a case in point. This indicates that Americans are very loyal to certain friends and allies.

However, few trends are universal as far as the favorable opinions of one state toward another are concerned. When a Muslim state is known to have an unfavorable attitude toward Americans, the American people’s view of that state is correspondingly negative. At present, most Muslim countries fall into this category. Similarly, if a Muslim state’s view of Americans improves, Americans’ corresponding view also improves. Ratings of Indonesia, pre- and post-Tsunami, are an example of this reciprocation. Thus the data highlights the significance of two aspects of state-to-state relations: person-to-person contacts in state-to-state relationships and the application of information operations (soft power) are of key importance.

3. System

The American view that the Muslim World is a system is based largely on two aspects of Muslim countries that affect their international relations with non-Muslim countries: their system of government and the prominent role of religion. These American views are rooted in Americans basic sense of America as a democracy. Because Americans feel proud of their experience as a free and democratic country, most Americans tend to think “Wilsonian”¹²² when it comes to democracy and its spread around the world. Therefore, intuitively, Americans generally consider countries with democratic governments better than autocratic countries. Most of the Muslim World, however, has the latter form of governance. Nonetheless, U.S. foreign policy seems comfortable with most of the autocratic Muslim states, especially in the most conflicted region, the Middle East and South Asia.

From the data, it is hard to determine whether the American public wants this U.S. accommodation to change, especially in light of the increasing emphasis on “Islamism” in some Muslim countries. The electoral success of Hamas in Palestine, the rise of Islamic parties in Egypt and Turkey, the threat of Islamic extremists taking over the nuclear Pakistan, and the rhetoric of “democratically” elected President of Iran are all events watched closely by Americans. Considering the probability that the majority of the populace in most of the Muslim World may not have a favorable opinion of Americans, we wonder if Americans will continue to support the development of democratic systems of governance in Muslim countries, or will they end up sharing the U.S. government’s policies, which seem to us to be counter to American democratic values.

When it comes to Muslim countries and religion, the data shows that Americans have a definite view. First, in the polls and surveys, non-Muslim countries are given much higher favorability ratings by Americans. Second, secular or moderate Islamic countries like Turkey, Morocco, Indonesia, Kuwait, Bahrain, etc., are viewed more favorably than other countries that call themselves Islamic.

¹²² Book Review of Special Providence by Walter Russell Mead, FUTURECASTS 5:9, 1 September 2003; accessed 30 October 2006; available at <http://www.futurecasts.com>.

Polls of Americans' views of Islam reveal that Americans who are more knowledgeable about Islam tend to have favorable views of Islam. Similarly, younger Americans (<30 yrs) view Islam more favorable than older Americans. This may mean that Americans of the older generation are more likely to make judgments based on religion. It could also mean that younger Americans, compared to their elders, have more interest in or more access to, information and knowledge about other religions or about Islam in particular. The polls also show that Americans view Islam differently than the way they view Muslims. Of the three categories – American Muslims, Muslims, and Islam – Islam receives the least favorable ratings. Although a majority of Americans rate Islam, favorably, the marginal percentile difference between those holding favorable and those holding unfavorable opinions indicates that Islam is not very popular as a religion among Americans.

Overall, looking at American's "Systemic" view of the Muslim World, most Muslim countries are not democratic, not secular, and their state religion is Islam. When these factors are combined and compared with the American views of rest of the world, the results suggests that the Americans' "religious-lens" dominates any other lens through which they view Muslims or Muslim countries. In one way, this opinion resonates of Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilization*, i.e. Christianity vs. Islam; in another way, the opinion suggests that anything related to Islam, Muslims or Muslim countries, appear to be threatening to the Americans as Americans and not as Christians. Correspondingly, Americans tends to be more negative towards Islam and Muslim countries than towards other religions and countries of the world.

G. SUMMARY

Americans' views of the Muslim world have remained consistent for many years, with very few exceptions. The terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, and the events related to Muslim world that followed have apparently not significantly altered Americans' views of most of the Muslim countries. However, Saudi Arabia and Arabs collectively have experienced the greatest declines in American public opinion. The Middle Eastern region of the Muslim World has, as one might expect, attracted the most attention from Americans.

Although Americans' view the three subjects – Muslims, Muslim countries, and Islam – differently, all three consistently receive low favorability ratings within their individual categories, that is, Muslims as individuals, Muslim countries as states, and the Islam as a system. In light of this data finding, therefore, we conclude that the common determining factor appears to be the religion-based identity of Muslims.

Among the three categories – Muslim Americans, other Muslims, and Islam – Americans were most comfortable with the subject, Muslim Americans. And “other Muslims” was rated, categorically, better than “Islam.” “Islam,” though it received favorable rating by the majority of respondents, remained below 40 percent, and received almost the same percentage of unfavorable votes. In regard to Muslim countries, Americans' views appear to depend on three main aspects: Americans threat perceptions about Muslims states, the United States' strategic interests in a particular state, and the Muslim state's relations with U.S.-friendly countries. The latter aspect, especially with respect to the U.S.-friendly state of Israel, appears to have the major impact on Americans' views of individual Muslim states. Other significant factors include Americans' perception of reciprocity of opinion, or the lack thereof, among the population of an individual Muslim country, a given country's system of governance, and the role of Islam in the lives of the people and their leaders.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

A. REALITIES AND FALLACIES

In the final section of this chapter we will present our proposals and recommendations for an appropriate strategy to reduce the information and perception gap between Americans and the Muslim World. However, to provide background and context, it is important first to identify the realities and fallacies that emerged from the polling data and survey reports. These realities and fallacies have highlighted and directed us to the most pertinent course of action. The data analyzed in the preceding chapter supports the following existing realities:

- For the U.S. government, the American public's view of the Muslim World is an important aspect to consider. Americans understand that American-Muslim relations are an important aspect of contemporary world issues, most of which relate to Muslims in one way or another.
- Americans maintain a strong sense of nationalism, regardless of their religious and ethnic diversity. Americans view Muslim Americans more favorably than they view other Muslims. This perception is in line with Americans' basic cultural values.
- Americans view Muslims differently than they view Islam.
- A majority of Americans have either limited or no knowledge of Islam. Americans who are more educated hold a better view of Islam than less-educated Americans.
- The American public has a tendency to react to major events / incidents. More often than not, this reaction results in a correlated decline of favorability in response due to a negative incident, rather than a corresponding increase in favorability due to a positive event.
- Americans give due consideration to their historic friendships with other countries. This means that when Americans believe that the United States has a close relationship with another country, it is difficult to change that opinion. Similarly, Americans also do not easily change their negative views of other countries.
- Cultures, religions, and societies that interact more frequently with Americans or have representatives in the American political sphere hold better reciprocal views of Americans.

The fallacies that surfaced from our data analysis are as follows:

- **Fallacy: The Great Divide.** Though there is a divide between Americans and the Muslim World, it is not the “great divide” that people often say it is. Neither group wants the other group eliminated.
- **Fallacy: Islam Is Better than Muslims.** Americans view Muslims differently than Islam, and, interestingly, the favorability ratings for Muslims are higher than those for the religion they follow, Islam.
- **Fallacy: 9/11 Changed Americans’ Views.** Except for Saudi Arabia, Americans’ views toward Muslim countries have not changed considerably since 9/11. Countries with net-positive ratings prior to 9/11 maintained those ratings. The same is true for countries with net-negative ratings. However, American opinions regarding Saudi Arabia shifted from favorable to unfavorable.
- **Fallacy: U.S. Foreign Policy Does Not Reflect the Views of the American Public.** While U.S. foreign policy may not always be aligned perfectly with the American public’s views; it continues to pursue the desires of the American public. Therefore, what is sometimes seen as “American hypocrisy” may actually be a process of U.S. foreign-policy realignment in keeping with the wishes of the American public. The idea that Americans disagree consistently with U.S. foreign policy and thus that the policies should be viewed differently may be wrong.
- **Fallacy: Muslim Americans Are More Muslim than American.** There are a significant number of Muslim Americans in the United States. Most are educated and deeply rooted in the social fabric of America. American Muslims’ political views are more aggressive than non-Muslim Americans’ toward other Muslims.
- **Fallacy: More Familiarity with Islam Will Not Change Americans’ Views.** Americans’ views toward Islam and Muslims are more favorable in those areas of the United States where large numbers of Muslims live or where knowledge of Islam and Muslims is greater.
- **Fallacy: Arabs Are the “Real” Muslims and Constitute a Majority**
Contrary to the common belief, Arabs do not constitute the dominant population within the Muslim World. The majority of the Muslim World population lives in the Eastern region. Similarly, the majority of Muslims in the United States are from the Eastern region of the Muslim World, not from the Middle East.
- **Fallacy: Americans’ Views Are Not Biased.** Whether Americans realize it or not, their views of Muslim countries are strongly influenced by the diplomatic relations the Muslim country has with the state of Israel. In 1973, this factor alone changed Americans’ view of Egypt from unfavorable to favorable. This is one example of the swift change that can

occur in Americans' views toward a country because of the influence of Israel. Americans' have an unfavorable opinion of Muslim (and other) countries that do not have diplomatic relations with Israel.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

The realities and misconceptions outlined in the preceding sections derive solely from the polling and survey data. The data represents the opinion of the American public in general, not a specific group of Americans. In light of these significant analysis points, therefore, making necessary changes in the United States' information strategy may be effective in improving relations between Americans and the Muslim World.

1. First Argument

For many years, Americans' views of Muslim countries have remained constant. According to the data, it is clear that, in forming their views, Americans view the Muslim World through a "religious" lens. This is neither a new phenomenon, nor a dangerous one. While a more favorable view of religions other than Islam may appear to indicate a "clash of civilizations," Islam and Muslims are not viewed with hatred in the way that Nazi Germany hated Judaism and Jews. If political stabilization and better information in Europe could improve the situation in the anti-Jewish world, it can do the same for Muslims and Islam in America, which stands for universal values of religious and political liberty and freedom of thought and expression. Before this can happen, however, it is important for the countries involved to realize and acknowledge the divide that exists between them.

The data suggests that, while Americans want to improve their relationship with the Muslim World, they feel that Muslims are not equally sincere in their desire for improved relations. Americans also believe that while they are respectful of Islamic values, Muslims are not equally respectful of American values. This is apparently a one-sided point of view on the part of Americans. Only if both Americans and Muslims become more knowledgeable about each other will they be able to find common ground and dispel this common misconception. To accomplish this, American Muslims must become involved as mediators between the two groups.

But will Americans accept American Muslims as mediators? Hopefully. The poll data shows that the common belief that Americans view Muslims and Islam the same is

wrong. Americans have a more favorable opinion of American Muslims that they do of Islam itself. But as the polls also show, this may be because Americans lack knowledge of Islam. In those geographical areas where there is more interaction between Americans and Muslims, or where Americans are more knowledgeable about Islam, Americans tend to have a better view of both Islam and Muslims. There is an obvious need, therefore, to increase awareness of Islam among Americans, and the best way to do this is for those who have accurate and ample knowledge of Islam, at the same time, are viewed favorably by Americans – American Muslims – to become more actively involved in the process.

2. First Recommendation: Encourage Americans to Inform and Educate Americans

American Muslims should be encouraged to act as a bridge between Americans and Muslims and between the United States and the Muslim World. American Muslims should actively participate as citizens of the United States, not merely as members of the Ummah, so that their country, America, will be viewed more favorably by Muslims and the Muslim World. At the same time, American Muslims should make other Americans more familiar with Islam and Muslim religious practices, without an overt or covert attempt at proselytizing.

3. Second Argument

American polls clearly indicate that Muslims' least admired qualities are an alleged proclivity for violence, an inclination toward fanaticism and radicalism, and closed-mindedness. This view seems to be associated more with Muslims in general than with American Muslims. Violent and terrorist world events, especially in Europe, the Middle East, and South Asia validate Americans' fears of fanaticism and radicalism. At the same time, a majority of Americans also acknowledge that Islam does not encourage violence. Indeed, no religion or spiritual belief in the world encourages violence and extremism, although sometimes incorrect and misguided preachers do so. To Americans, Muslims' most admired qualities are an adherence to Islamic teachings and religious devoutness.

The polls show that, in the opinion of the American public, Muslims tend to follow the teachings of Islam devotedly, and yet, in spite of the teachings of Islam, some Muslims

become violent and fanatical. There seems to be a definite gap between the true teachings of Islam and the understanding of Islam by some Muslims. Therefore, there may be a need also to teach true Islam to the Muslims of the Muslim World.

4. Second Recommendation – Encourage Muslims to Educate Other Muslims

The U.S. government should work closely with the governments of the Muslim World to improve Islamic education in their respective countries. The U.S. government should not define the curriculum, but call on authentic and reliable Islamic educational institutions to support this cause. Moderate-appearing institutions like Egypt's Al-Azhar University and Pakistan's Islamic University can offer educational assistance to Sunni-dominated countries. For Shia countries like Iraq, a local university could be selected. American Muslims could also be involved, though that might be perceived as an American attempt to teach "Islam al Amreeki"¹²³ to the Muslim World. Therefore, the role of American Muslims outside the Western world might not have a positive effect at present. This role will become very important over time, however. (This aspect will be discussed further later in the chapter.)

5. Third Argument

The American policy that "the enemy of my friend is my enemy" is very strong; this was very clear in the polls. Americans' relations with Israel have a dual effect in the Muslim World. First, the majority of Muslims do not approve of the close U.S.-Israel relationship. Consequently, Muslims' perceptions of Americans have become more unfavorable over time. As a result, Americans' reciprocal view of Muslim countries has also deteriorated. Second, Muslims view Israelis as Zionists and occupiers of Islamic holy land, which is also the Christian/Judaic so-called Holy Land. Many Americans have an opposing perspective: they consider Jews the rightful residents of the Holy Land as per certain biblical prophecies. In this Muslim-American conflict, therefore, Americans are more closely aligned with the supposedly aggrieved party, Israel. Countries that acknowledge the existence of the state of Israel, like Turkey, Jordan, and Egypt are beneficiaries of Americans' more favorable opinions about them, in contrast to countries that do not recognize Israel.

¹²³ "American Islam," in Arabic.

Polls also show that Americans acknowledge the importance of a resolution to the Middle East crisis between Israel and the Palestinians. This issue is closer to the hearts and minds of Muslim countries than their own regional problems. A just and quick resolution of the Israel-Palestinian issue would drastically improve Muslims' view of America, which might, in turn, lead to Americans having a more favorable opinion of the Muslim World. However, any resolution of the Israel-Palestinian dispute must be unbiased and equally benefit both parties.

6. Third Recommendation: A Realistic View, Fair Solution, and Idealistic Idea

It is vitally important that Muslims of the Islamic World realize the importance of the United States's relations with Israel. Muslims sometimes suspect or believe that regional and world events are the result of a conspiracy in which "Zionist Jews" are involved with the U.S. government supporting them. First, what needs to be realized more fully is the great importance that many Americans, as individuals, attach to their friendship with the people of Israel. A more realistic view needs to be developed in both the Muslim World and in America. Second, the people of Israel must realize that Americans care about how they are viewed by the Muslim World. And Americans also recognize that a good relationship with Muslim countries is in the interest of both the American people and the people of Israel. Third, Americans need to learn and understand the reality of the Middle East crisis – the unbiased story. Finally, the U.S. government should put forward a fair peace proposal. At present, Americans seem ready and likely to approve any just solution that is proposed for the Middle East crisis.

C. THE ROLE OF AMERICAN MUSLIMS

Recommendations suggested in this paper require an active role by American Muslims. Our polling-data analysis reflects Americans' distrustful view of Arabs, who not only are mistakenly identified as the Muslim majority in the United States and the world, but also are thought of as ideal, "true" Muslims. Americans' persistently wary view of Muslims and the events on and following 9/11 have made life increasingly difficult for Muslims in America. Tighter security measures at airports, subway stations, and other public places and continuous reports of higher or raised "threat levels" by the media have

made the general view of Muslims even bleaker. Every Muslim and every Arab is now seen as a threat. Given these circumstances, American Muslims are increasingly being forced to prove that they are good and true and loyal citizens of the United States.

However, even after the horrific events of 9/11, Americans have not isolated Muslims the way they are isolated in European countries. One reason for this difference may be the colonial mindset of many European countries. Another major and more realistic reason may be the uniqueness of Americans and their values, according to which, at least ideally, all citizens must be treated fairly and squarely, without discrimination on the basis of race, religion, or ethnic diversity. Such an ideal lack of discrimination is not found within the Muslim World, where societies are often divided into religious sects. Often, these sects are more tolerant of other religions than they are of other sects within Islam. In such environments, an open discussion and debate about Islam and reformation does not seem likely.

Europe also was once thought of as a center of reformation for Islam. Lately, however, there has been a violent fallout in Europe due to failed government policies, the public's negative response, and preaching by religious leaders brought in from outside the country. These Imams do not share common cultural values with the second- and third-generation European Muslims. Their religious sermons highlight problems in the Imam's country and blame the West for all the bad that is happening there. In such situations, terrorist organizations like al Qaeda find fertile ground for indoctrinating frustrated and angry Muslims. European governments' initial responses, therefore, have entailed the use of an iron fist in an effort to stop this hostile trend.

In spite of the PATRIOT Act and other intelligence-gathering and surveillance measures, the United States still provides the best atmosphere in which to practice one's religion openly and freely. The polling data shows that the majority of American Muslims are well settled in the United States and are not frustrated to the degree that Muslims are in Europe. Currently, there are numerous organizations that work to gain greater recognition and acceptance of Muslims politically, socially and legally. Moreover, they provide many

great opportunities for researching and gaining knowledge about Islam and other religions of the world. These factors distinguish the United States as the best place for an Islamic reformation.

American Muslims need to start a peaceful reformation of Islam at the local mosque level. Their first attempt should be to establish American Imams. To do that, instead of importing Imams from the Middle East, American Muslims should encourage young students, first, to gain religious knowledge in the world's renowned Islamic universities and, then, to become Imams of a local mosque. This will open up a new line of work for American Muslim scholars and, simultaneously, eliminate the opportunity of possible recruitment of the Muslim American youth for violent "jihadis." The U.S. government, with the support of Islamic organizations in the United States, should help create opportunities for college and university majors in Islamic studies. For doctorate or higher studies of Islam, American Muslims should be sent to universities that have the teachers and the curriculum to qualify them to be Imams. This way, more Imams would be Americans, while their religion would remain legitimately Islam, not "Islam al Amreeki." The Fellowship of Islamic Universities would keep the American Imams connected with the contemporary religious issues of the Islamic world. In ten to fifteen years time, these Imams would be able to build a reputation within the religious circle of the Muslim World. And their American background and religious knowledge would create opportunities for them as American Imams to make their presence felt in the Islamic World.

This so-called "Islamic reformation at the edge"¹²⁴ may seem a far cry from the present situation, yet it is imminently practical. A reformation of Islam can only be done by Muslims, and it is possible only in a place: 1) where Muslims are known as "Muslims," not as "Sunni," "Shia," "Wahabi," and so on; 2) where followers of other religions are more tolerant; 3) where a constitution provides for the free and open practice of religion; and 4) where nationalism is more prominent than religious identity. There is no Muslim or European country that can provide all these prerequisites. America is the best – and probably the only – such venue at present.

¹²⁴ Source is NPS Professor John Arquilla's concept of "military innovation at the edges," in which an "edge" is the place where a change is least expected.

**American-Muslims may prove to be the key to improving relations between
Americans and the Muslim World**

D. ROLE OF THE MUSLIM WORLD

As Americans say, it is not possible to “clap with one hand.” The Muslim World must be prepared to participate in improving bilateral relations with Americans. Due to its strategic interests, the U.S. government tends to concentrate more on countries’ political, economic, and defense-related issues. Instead, the U.S. government should push Muslim countries to concentrate on the education of Muslims. For example, if the U.S. government gives aid to Pakistan to improve the literacy rate in the country, instead of concentrating primarily on the syllabi and the Quranic verses written in their books, the U.S. should require nominations by an Islamic University or a board of Islamic education with qualified religious “ulama”¹²⁵ from all sects to decide which books of Islamic literature and history are legitimate and appropriate. In addition, the U.S. could then support constructing madrassas¹²⁶ that would work directly under the established board of Islamic education. The basic idea is to have a local oversight structure for a moderate-Islamic education, with modern syllabi. The effect would likely be tremendous among the local population, who otherwise think that Americans are anti-madrassas. This improvement in the image of Americans could, in turn, mean a reciprocal improvement of Muslims’ view of Americans.

Another aspect that Muslim countries need to reconsider is the acceptance of the state of Israel. The state of Israel is a reality, and that it will be washed off from the face of earth, is a fantasy. Muslim countries need to recognize Israel and then work out a solution for Palestinians, instead of expecting a breakthrough without any dialogue.

**Muslims’ relations with the United States are important for both Muslims and
Americans; the situation will not improve unless both parties move forward.**

¹²⁵ Ulama, plural of Aalim, means “Islamic scholars.”

¹²⁶ Islamic schools where all types of basic education is provided, along with boarding and lodging facilities.

E. CONCLUSION

Americans' general view of the Muslim World has become more significant since the appalling terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Events in the last five years have necessitated an improvement in the relations between the two, Americans and Muslims. This is not only important for the security of Americans, but also for the development of the Muslim World.

Most Muslim countries achieved their independence during the twentieth century. The earliest polling data on Americans' views toward Muslim countries became available after World War II. Americans' views regarding the majority of Muslim countries have remained consistently unfavorable. There was no significant change in that view after the events on 9/11. As the perpetrators of 9/11, Arabs and their country or origin received the maximum negative effect of 9/11. However, Americans' views of Arabs were bad even before 9/11.

The polling data reveals a definite religious bias in the way Americans view Muslims. At the same time, Americans also apply a "nationalist" lens that is evident in polling results showing Americans' favoring of American Muslims over Muslims in other countries. Islam is not popular among Americans who lack knowledge of Islam, or in areas where the Muslim population is small. Americans also have a clear tendency to view friends of Israel as good and enemies of Israel as bad.

The Americans' view of the Muslim World can be changed by improving Americans' information about Islam and American Muslims. This can best be accomplished by actively involving American Muslims, who could facilitate bridging the gap between Americans and Islam by demonstrating how Islamic practices fit into a Western democracy. American Muslims are fortunate to reside in the best political and civil rights environment in the world in which to reform Islam through an active and fruitful dialogue with the Islamic world. To avoid being labeled perpetrators of an "American conspiracy to detract from Islam," American Muslims, with the help of the U.S. government and the governments of Muslim countries, need to establish relationships with the major Islamic institutions of the Muslim World. This could be possible through educational channels and through fellowship with these Islamic education centers.

The Muslim World has a great responsibility to improve relations with the United States. To improve diplomatic relations, Muslim countries must realize that U.S. foreign policy is closely aligned with certain choices that Americans make. Muslim countries cannot hope for a lasting relationship with the United States unless the Americans view those countries favorably. For that to happen, Muslim countries need to improve their relations with Israel, make an effort to educate their populations to follow a true and legitimate Islam, and interact with the American public through all possible means to also provide them with first-hand knowledge about Islam, Muslims, and Muslim countries.

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APPENDIX A. MAP OF EASTERN REGION



Figure 3. The Muslim East (From: World Map: Asia, accessed 23 November 2006, available at <http://www.world-maps.co.uk/continent-map-of-asia.htm>).

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APPENDIX B. MAP OF MIDDLE EASTERN REGION



Figure 4. The Muslim Middle East (From: The World Map: The Middle East, accessed 23 November 2006, available at <http://www.world-maps.co.uk/continent-map-of-middle-east.htm>).

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APPENDIX C. MAP OF MIDDLE WESTERN REGION



Figure 5. The Muslim Middle West (From: World Map: Africa, accessed 23 November 2006, available at <http://www.world-maps.co.uk/continent-map-of-africa.htm>).

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APPENDIX D. MAP OF WESTERN REGION



Figure 6. The Muslim West. (From: Map of the World: World: Religion, accessed 6 November 2006, available at <http://www.mapsofworld.com/images/world-religion-map.jpg>).

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APPENDIX E. GALLUP POLL, FEBRUARY 6 –9, 2006: PERCEPTIONS OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES

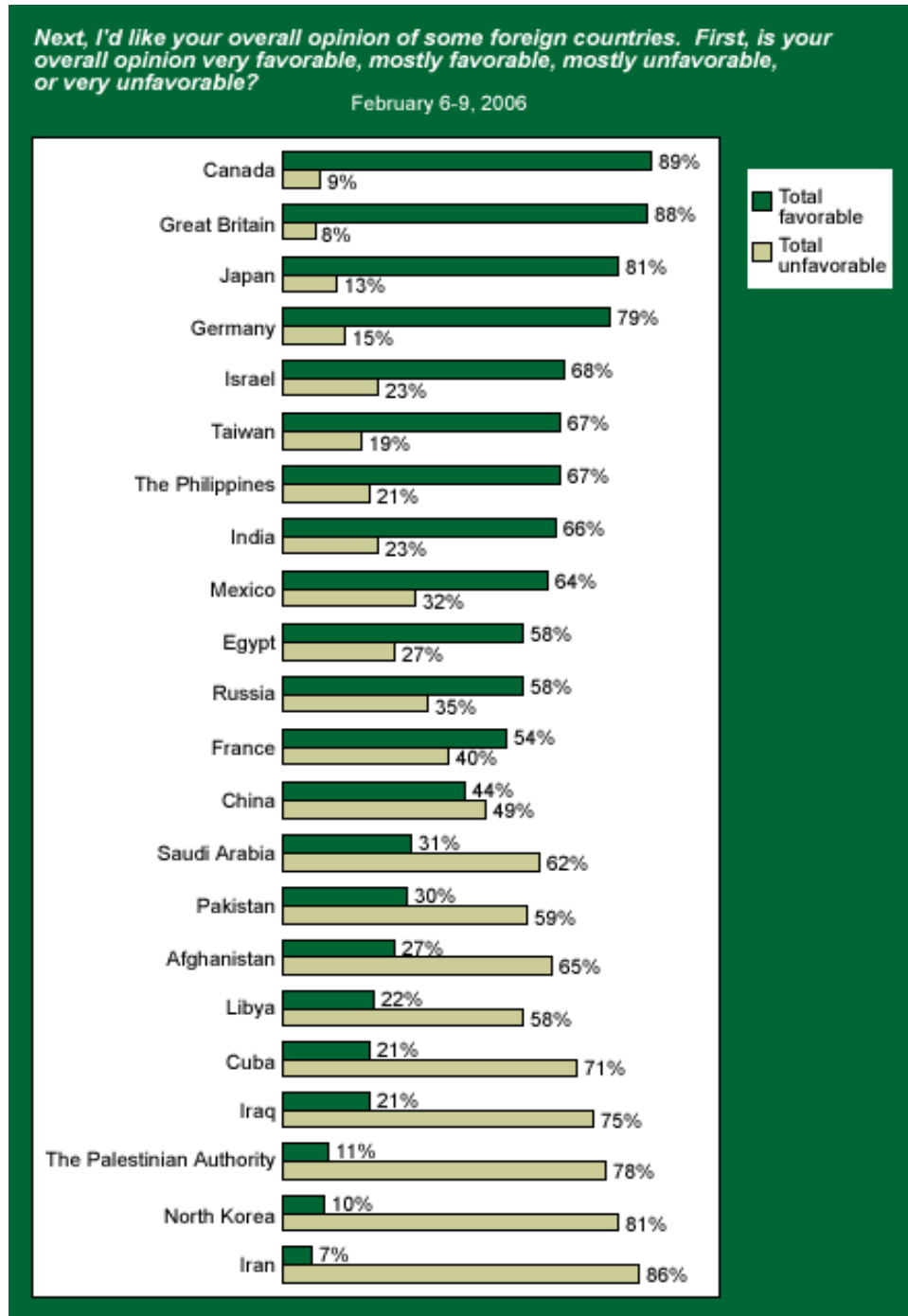


Figure 7. Perceptions of Foreign Countries (From: Gallup Poll, 6-9 February 2006).

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APPENDIX F. GALLUP POLL, FEBRUARY 2006: ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

Q. As you may know, the Palestinians recently held elections to elect a new government. Do you happen to know which political party won those elections – [ROTATED: Hamas (or) Fatah] – or are you unsure?

	Hamas	Fatah	Unsure	No answer
2006 Feb 6–9	48%	2	49	1

Q. What do you think U.S. policy toward the Palestinian Authority should be? Do you think the U.S. should – [ROTATED: conduct diplomatic relations with the Hamas government regardless of whether or not it recognizes Israel as a country, conduct diplomatic relations with Hamas only if it recognizes Israel as a country, or not conduct diplomatic relations with the Hamas government at all]?

	Regardless of recognizing Israel	Only if recognizes Israel	No relations at all	No opinion
2006 Feb 6–9 ^	22%	44	25	9

^ Asked of a half sample.

Q. What do you think U.S. policy toward the Palestinian Authority should be? Do you think the U.S. should – [ROTATED: give financial aid to the Palestinian Authority regardless of whether or not the Hamas government recognizes Israel as a country, give financial aid to the Palestinian Authority only if Hamas recognizes Israel as a country, or not give any financial aid to the Palestinian Authority while the Hamas government is in power]?

	Regardless of recognizing Israel	Only if recognizes Israel	No aid at all	No opinion
2006 Feb 6–9 ^	5%	30	57	9

^ Asked of a half sample.

Q. Do you think that will happen in – the next year, the next five years, the next twenty-five years, the next fifty years, or sometime after that?

	2005 Feb 25–27
	%
Yes, there will come a time	40
(In the next year)	(2)
(In the next five years)	(19)
(In the next twenty-five years)	(12)
(In the next fifty years)	(2)
(Sometime after that)	(3)
(Unsure)	(2)
No, there will not come a time	56
No opinion	4

APPENDIX G. 2002 AND 2005 GALLUP POLLS: AMERICANS' VIEWS OF MUSLIMS AND ISLAM

- (a) In your own words, what do you admire most about the Muslim or Islamic world?¹²⁷

	%
Faithful to/sincere in religious beliefs	22
Preservation of own culture/traditions	12
Goodwill toward others/Caring	7
Strong family/social bonds	3
Unity of Muslims	3
Economic wealth/Rich in resources	1
Other	2
Nothing	32
Everything	--
No opinion	25

Table 23. What Americans Admire the Most in Muslims (After: Gallup Poll: Mid December Economic Poll, 19–22 December 2005)

- (b) In your own words, what do you admire least about the Muslim or Islamic world?

Extremism/Radicalism/Not open to other ideas	33
Inadequate observation of/adherence to Islamic teachings	11
Lack of gender equality	9
Not motivated to be a part of / have relations with rest of world	7
Inadequate protection of human rights/civil liberties	6
Not motivated to defend themselves/subjugated to the West	5
Corruption in government/society	4
Lack of unity among Islamic countries	3

¹²⁷ Mid December Economic Poll, The Gallup Poll, 19-22 December 2005, accessed 3 June 2006, available at <http://institution.gallup.com.libproxy.nps.navy.mil/documents/question.aspx?question=155569&Advanced=0&SearchConType=1&SearchTypeAll=admire%20Muslim%20Islamic%20world> (Percentages add to more than 100 percent due to multiple responses).

Extremism/Radicalism/Not open to other ideas	33
Undeveloped/Backward/Lack of progress	2
Imitate/Influenced by Western culture	1
Other	2
Nothing	10
Everything	1
No opinion	21

Table 24. What Americans Admire the Least in Muslims? (After: Gallup Poll: Mid December Economic Poll, 19–22 December 2005)

- (c) Would you say that you are angry -- or not angry -- at Muslim countries?¹²⁸

Angry	29.59	255
Not angry	68.63	592
Don't know	1.34	12
Refused	0.45	4

Table 25. Are Americans Angry at Muslims? (After: Gallup Poll: March Wave 1: American's Views of Muslim Countries, 1–3 March 2003)

- (d) Generally speaking, do you think the Islamic religion encourages violence -- more than other religions around the world, about the same amount, or less than other religions around the world?¹²⁹

More than other religions around the world	35.18	303
About the same amount	49.04	423
Less than other religions around the world	11.52	99
Don't know	3.68	32
Refused to say	0.58	5

Table 26. Does Islam Encourage Violence? (After: Gallup Poll: March Wave 1: Americans' Views of Muslim Countries, 1–3 March 2003)

¹²⁸ Americans' Views of Muslim Countries, The Gallup Poll, 1-3 March 2003, accessed 3 June 2006, available at <http://institution.gallup.com.libproxy.nps.navy.mil/documents/questionnaire.aspx?STUDY=P0203008>.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

- (e) Which of the following statements, if any, do you associate with Muslim countries? How about, They respect Western or American values?¹³⁰

Yes, associate	12.90	111
No, do not associate	82.00	707
Don't know	5.01	43
Refused	0.10	1

Table 27. Do Muslim Respect American Values? (After: Gallup Poll: March Wave 1: American's View of Muslim Countries, 1–3 March 2003)

- (f) People say different things about different cultures. Which of the following statements, if any, do you associate with the United States and other Western nations? How about...They are eager to have better relationships with Muslim countries?¹³¹

Yes, associate	69.62	600
No, do not associate	27.21	235
Don't know	3.00	26
Refused to say	0.17	1

Table 28. American Relations with Muslim Countries? (After: Gallup Poll: March Wave 1: American's View of Muslim Countries, 1–3 March 2003)

¹³⁰ Americans' Views of Muslim Countries, The Gallup Poll, 1-3 March 2003, 3 accessed June 2006, available at <http://institution.gallup.com.libproxy.nps.navy.mil/documents/questionnaire.aspx?STUDY=P0203008>.

¹³¹ Ibid.

- (g) People say different things about different cultures. Which of the following statements, if any, do you associate with the United States and other Western nations? How about...They take fair positions toward Muslim countries?¹³²

Yes, associate	66.44	573
No, do not associate	28.08	242
Don't know	5.11	44
Refused to say	0.37	3

Table 29. Americans' Position toward Muslim Countries? (After: Gallup Poll: March Wave 1: American's View of Muslim Countries, 1–3 March 2003)

- (h) People say different things about different cultures. Which of the following statements, if any, do you associate with the United States and other Western nations? How about...They respect Islamic values?¹³³

Yes, associate	64.07	553
No, do not associate	31.60	273
Don't know	4.16	36
Refused	0.17	1

Table 30. Do Americans Respect Islamic Values? (After: Gallup Poll: March Wave 1: Americans' Views of Muslim Countries, 1–3 March 2003)

¹³² Americans' Views of Muslim Countries, The Gallup Poll, 1–3 March 2003, accessed 3 June 2006, available at <http://institution.gallup.com.libproxy.nps.navy.mil/documents/questionnaire.aspx?STUDY=P0203008>.

¹³³ Ibid.

- (i) How much does it matter to you personally what people in Muslim countries think of the U.S. -- a great deal, a moderate amount, not much, or not at all?¹³⁴

A great deal	23.86	104
A moderate amount	29.11	127
Not much	24.04	105
Not at all	22.83	100
Don't know	0.17	1
Refused to say	0.00	0

Table 31. What Muslims Think of the U.S. ... Does it Matter? (After: Gallup Poll: March Wave 1: American's View of Muslim Countries, 1-3 March 2003)

- (j) In general, do you think people in Muslim countries have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, neither favorable nor unfavorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of the United States?¹³⁵

Very favorable	1.21	10
Somewhat favorable	7.72	67
Neither favorable nor unfavorable	7.31	63
Somewhat unfavorable	34.50	298
Very unfavorable	47.01	405
Don't know	2.01	17
Refused	0.23	2

Table 32. Muslims View of the U.S. (Americans' Perspective)? (After: Gallup Poll: March Wave 1 – American's Views of Muslim Countries, 1-3 March 2003)

¹³⁴ Americans' Views of Muslim Countries, The Gallup Poll, 1-3 March 2003, accessed 3 June 2006, available at <http://institution.gallup.com.libproxy.nps.navy.mil/documents/questionnaire.aspx?STUDY=P0203008>.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

- (k) In general, please tell whether your opinion of Muslim countries is very favorable, somewhat favorable, neither favorable nor unfavorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable?¹³⁶

Very favorable	2.18	19
Somewhat favorable	21.94	189
Neither favorable nor unfavorable	33.05	285
Somewhat unfavorable	26.95	232
Very unfavorable	13.53	117
Don't know	2.01	17
Refused to say	0.33	3

Table 33. Americans' View of Muslim Countries (After: Gallup Poll: March Wave 1: American's View of Muslim Countries, 1–3 March 2003)

¹³⁶ Americans' Views of Muslim Countries, The Gallup Poll: 1-3 March 2003, accessed 3 June 2006, available at <http://institution.gallup.com.libproxy.nps.navy.mil/documents/questionnaire.aspx?STUDY=P0203008>.

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